SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

勝木光

3

Baby Steps

ベイビーステップ

KCM3991
KC
Baby Steps
ベイビーステップ
3
勝木光
講談社

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1929979004002

SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

漫画を描く時、好きな作業は
目にトーンを貼ること。
テニスで好きなのは
壁打ちだったりする。
……地味。

勝木 光

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KC 藤木 光 作品

ベイビーステップ 1 ～以下続刊

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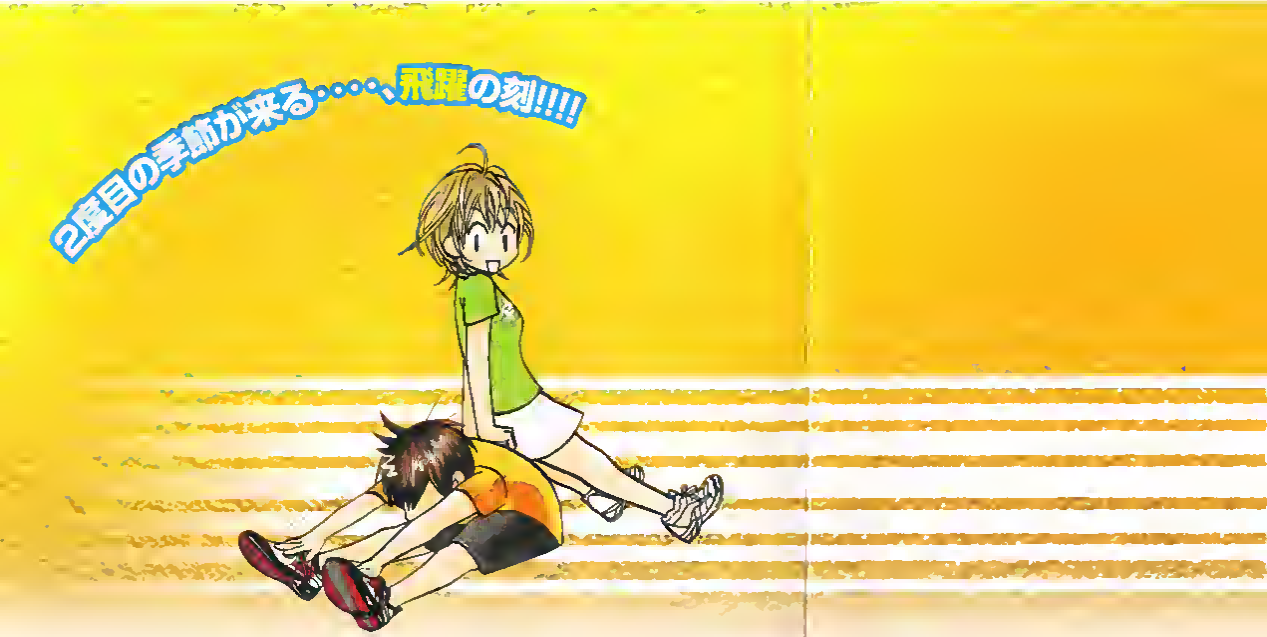

Cover Design Veia

2008 5
KC

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Baby Steps ベイビーステップ 人物紹介

エーちゃん 丸尾栄一郎

STC所属。几帳面でマジメな優等生。気楽な気持ちで始めたテニスに、どっぷりハマる。地道な練習をコツコツ続け、着々とレベルアップ中!! 練習や試合内容をすべて書き込んだ「エーちゃんノート」を武器に頑張れ!

ナツ 鷹崎奈津

STC所属。エーちゃんと同じ高校に通い、学年一かわいいと評判。性格はテキトーで大雑把だが、テニスに向ける情熱は人一倍!! マジメに頑張るエーちゃんを心から応援している。

影山

エーちゃんのクラスメイト。

几帳面すぎるエーちゃんをからかいながらも、テニスの練習や試合に付き合うイイ奴。実は、エーちゃんが大化けするのを期待してる!?

No.
Date

江川諭

STC所属。恵まれた身体能力と技術で神奈川の頂点に君臨。プレースタイルはサーブ&ボレー。エーちゃんに何かとつっかかるも、そのガッツを意外と認めている!?

荒谷豪

GITC所属。スプリンターばりの脚力と強靭な上半身を持つ、恐るべき一発逆転型のベースライナー。

大竹優

梅田TC所属ながら、湘南工業学院テニス部副主将。プレースタイルはサーブ&ボレー。

三浦陣水

ファーサイドTA所属。あらゆるショットを器用にこなすオールラウンダー。

宮川孝也

宮川T.A.所属。武器は180cmの長身から繰り出されるスピードサーブ。

アニキ～～！

僕、深沢諭吉を含め
これが神奈川六天王です!!

Baby Steps

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#15 現実……005
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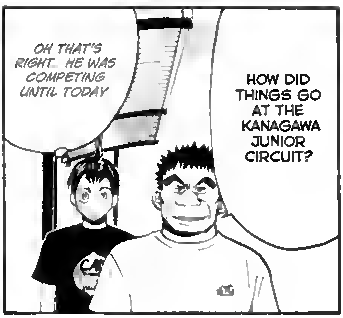
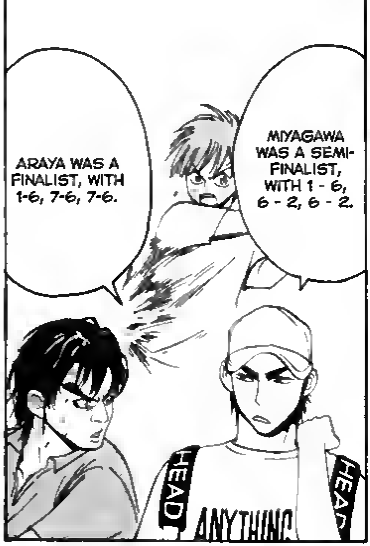
to Giant Strides

ANYTHING
TAKUMA-SAN...?

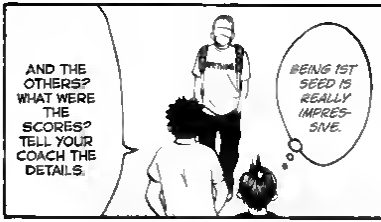
I WON IT ALL...
ANYTHING

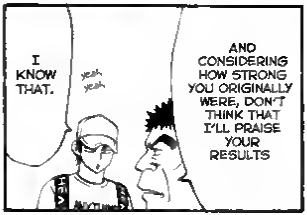

OH THAT'S RIGHT. HE WAS COMPETING UNTIL TODAY
HOW DID THINGS GO AT THE KANAGAWA JUNIOR CIRCUIT?

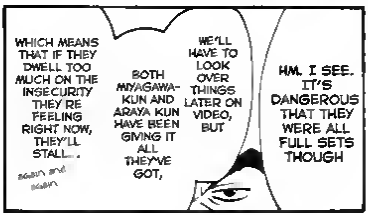
15

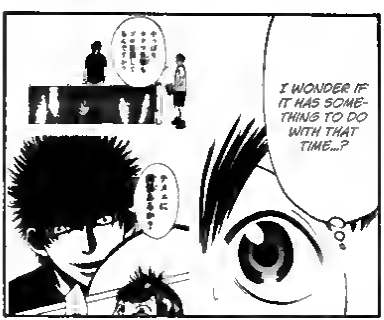

ARAYA WAS A FINALIST, WITH 1-6, 7-6, 7-6.
MIYAGAWA WAS A SEMI-FINALIST, WITH 1 - 6, 6 - 2, 6 - 2.
HEAD
ANYTHING

ALL...
SO THAT MEANS THAT HE WON FIRST PLACE!?


AND THE OTHERS? WHAT WERE THE SCORES? TELL YOUR COACH THE DETAILS.
BEING 1ST SEED IS REALLY IMPRESSIVE.


I KNOW THAT.
yeah, yeah
AND CONSIDERING HOW STRONG YOU ORIGINALLY WERE, DON'T THINK THAT I'LL PRAISE YOUR RESULTS

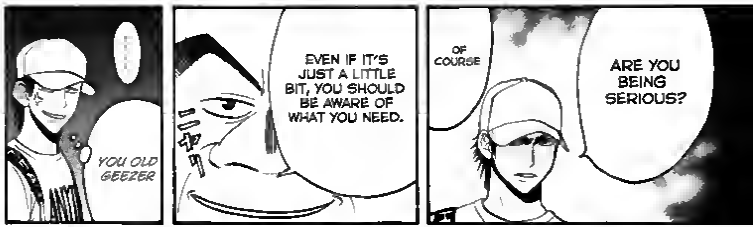

WHICH MEANS THAT IF THEY DWELL TOO MUCH ON THE INSECURITY THEY'RE FEELING RIGHT NOW, THEY'LL STALL...
BOTH MIYAGAWA-KUN AND ARAYA-KUN HAVE BEEN GIVING IT ALL THEY'VE GOT,
WE'LL HAVE TO LOOK OVER THINGS LATER ON VIDEO, BUT
HM. I SEE. IT'S DANGEROUS THAT THEY WERE ALL FULL SETS THOUGH


I WONDER IF IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THAT TIME...?

INSECURITY?
THAT'S RIGHT, YUKICHI-KUN WAS TALKING ABOUT THAT, TOO

DIDN'T YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE COMPETI-TION?
WHY DO YOU THINK I CALLED YOU OUT HERE?
HEY, HOLD ON!
LATER.
THERE'S ONLY ONE OTHER PERSON HERE.
WITH WHOM?
I WANT YOU TO PLAY ONE MORE MATCH.
YOU...YOU MEAN WITH ME?
WHAT ...?

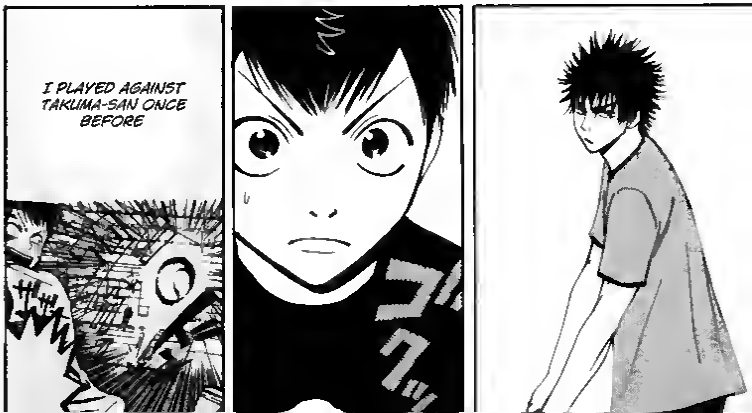
THIS BENEFITS YOU, TOO.
I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO PRACTICE WITH MARUO-KUN FOR JUST HIS BENEFIT.
HUH?
HEAD
I'M GOING HOME.
YOU MIGHT REGRET IT LATER.

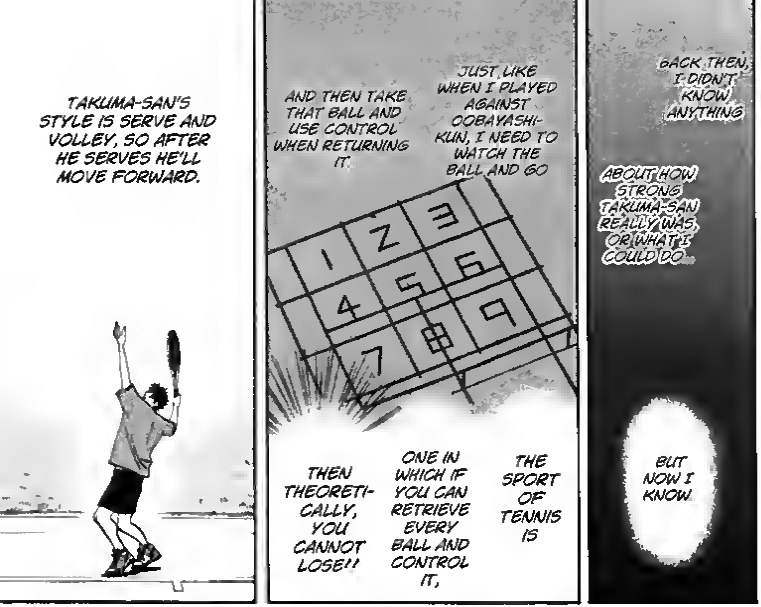

YOU OLD GEEZER
EVEN IF IT'S JUST A LITTLE BIT, YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF WHAT YOU NEED.
OF COURSE
ARE YOU BEING SERIOUS?

TO SEE HOW FAR I CAN GET AGAINST SOMEONE WHO RANKS SO HIGH...
IF I CAN USE ALL MY STRENGTH AND USE WHAT I JUST LEARNED
...BUT AN OPPORTUNITY LIKE THIS ALMOST NEVER COMES UP SO I WANT TO TRY IT!!
BETWEEN THE WINNER OF THE KANAGAWA JUNIOR CIRCUIT AND SOMEONE LIKE ME WHO WAS OUT IN THE FIRST ROUND!?
...A REAL MATCH?

PLEASE!!
HEAD
HEAD
!!
FINE, WHATEVER.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!
OK! WARM UP AND THEN GET ON THE COURT!

LET'S START WITH A 1 SET MATCH. TAKUMA SERVING
MARUO-KUN, TRY TO THINK ABOUT YOUR MATCH WITH OOBAYASHI.
AND ALSO ABOUT THE BASICS OF CONTROL
YES SIR!


I PLAYED AGAINST TAKUMA-SAN ONCE BEFORE
WHOOSH
ゴッ


TAKUMA-SAN'S STYLE IS SERVE AND VOLLEY, SO AFTER HE SERVES HE'LL MOVE FORWARD.
AND THEN TAKE THAT BALL AND USE CONTROL WHEN RETURNING IT.
JUST LIKE WHEN I PLAYED AGAINST OOBAYASHI-KUN, I NEED TO WATCH THE BALL AND GO
BACK THEN, I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING
ABOUT HOW STRONG TAKUMA-SAN REALLY WAS, OR WHAT I COULD DO...
BUT NOW I KNOW.
THEN THEORETI-CALLY, YOU CANNOT LOSE!!
ONE IN WHICH IF YOU CAN RETRIEVE EVERY BALL AND CONTROL IT,
THE SPORT OF TENNIS IS

HITTING IT UP IS TOO DANGER-OUS,
PLUS THERE'S NOT MUCH SPACE TO THE SIDE!
THAT MEANS...

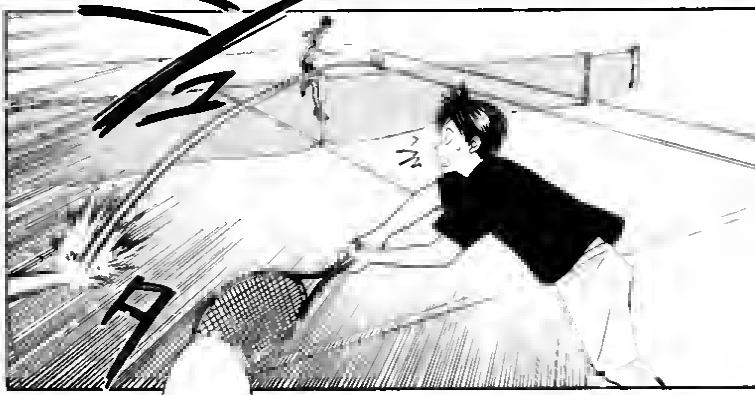
7
!!
I'LL DROP IT DOWN IN THE FRONT!!
IF THE BALL IS LOWER THAN THE NET THEN IT'S HARDER TO RETURN AS A FAST BALL!
I WAS RIGHT !!
1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9
IF I MOVE, THEN THE TARGETS MOVE TOO!
..WHICH MEANS..

THERE!
0 - 15
I GOT A POINT!!
AND I GOT IT AGAINST TAKUMA-SAN!!

I'LL TEACH HIM
BUT IT'S REALLY NAIVE TO THINK THAT HE CAN FIGHT AGAINST ME.
HMM...
IT'S THE COURT COVERING HE HAD AGAINST OOBAYASHI PLUS CONTROL...
THAT'S PRETTY SURPRISING.
sounds like something the Coach thought up
THAT THOSE EYES AND THAT BRAIN ALONE WON'T BE ENOUGH TO GET HIM CLOSE TO MY TERRITORY!

IT'S... FAST!!
GUH
IT'S COMING TO THE LEFT!!

THERE!!!



15 - 15
IS IT BECAUSE THE SPEED AND ANGLE WERE DIFFERENT FROM BEFORE!?
WHAT....? I COULDN'T GET IT. I KNEW WHERE IT WAS GOING TO GO BUT

IF I DROP IT LOW LIKE LAST TIME HE CAN'T HIT IT HARD
HE'S OUT AGAIN! I'LL DROP IT IN FRONT
BUT WHAT DO I DO!?
HE'S NOT OUT! IT WAS A FEINT!?
CRAP!! THAT WAS HIS STRATEGY!!
!?
SHIT!!
HE DIDN'T MOVE FORWARD, SO
IT'S A FREE BALL!!

EVEN IF I CAN CONTROL THE BALL...
WHEN I'M AGAINST HIS STRATEGY, HE'S GOT THE UPPER HAND!!
GUH
FLEX POINT

HIS REAL TALENT IS HIS DELICATE BALL TOUCH
TAKUMA'S SERVE IS OFTEN REGARDED AS HIS WEAPON BECAUSE OF HOW STRONG HE PLAYS, BUT
WH...WHAT SHOULD I DO...!?

AGAINST HIM, WHAT CAN I...
NIKE
YOU SAY, "I WANT TO WIN," BUT CONSIDER WHAT YOUR OPPONENT HAS TO OFFER.
HOWEVER, THIS IS THE REALITY.
WHEN IT COMES TO MARUO-KUN, HE DEFINITELY SEES VICTORY AS A SERIES OF CORRECT EQUATIONS LEADING TO A THEORETICAL OUTCOME.
"IF YOU CAN RETRIEVE EVERY BALL AND CONTROL IT, THEN THEORETICALLY, YOU CANNOT LOSE."
BECAUSE RIGHT NOW, YOU'RE STILL BURYING THAT REALITY.
IF YOU'RE REALLY AIMING FOR THAT GOAL, NOW IS THE TIME TO CLEARLY SEE THE REALITY THAT ISN'T BURIED IN YOUR THEORIES.
WHAT CAN I DO TO GET THESE BALLS?

2 YEARS AGO --
PLAYER 1
江川 逞
池 爽児
0 0
6 6
DUNLOP

THERE WAS AN OVER-WHELMING DIFFERENCE IN OUR LEVELS

I STOPPED THINKING THAT I COULD EVER BECOME A PRO
WHEN I REALIZED THAT I WASN'T A GENIUS AT THIS --

I WILL NEVER WIN AGAINST HIM.

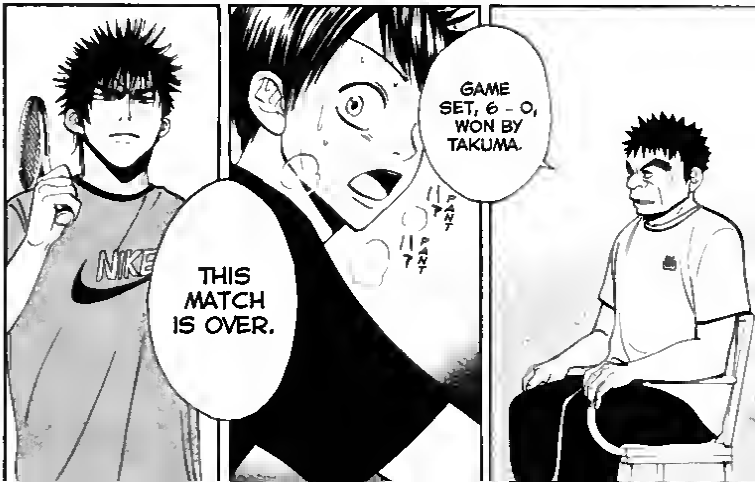
IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY NOTE-BOOKS YOU FILL UP.
NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRY, THERE ARE LEVELS THAT YOU'LL NEVER REACH.
IF YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE UP, IT'S BETTER TO DO IT SOONER RATHER THAN LATER.
WHAT !?
IT'S GOING RIGHT!!

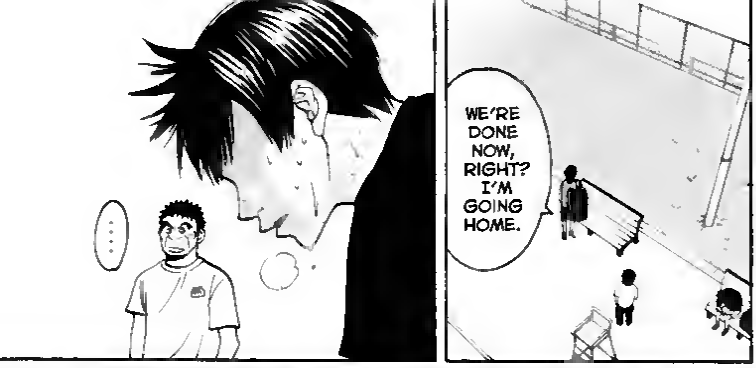
HE CHANGED COURSE AFTER I MOVED...
GAME!! 5 - 0, TAKUMA LEADS.
NIKE

IF YOU CAN RETRIEVE EVERY BALL AND CONTROL IT,
THEN THEORETICALLY, YOU CANNOT LOSE!!
IN MY HEAD, I CLEARLY UNDERSTAND WHAT I NEED TO DO, BUT
THIS IS WHAT I WAS AIMING FOR -
ALL THAT IS JUST IN THEORY AND ON PAPER.
CAN
VITAMIN C

#16 Break Time

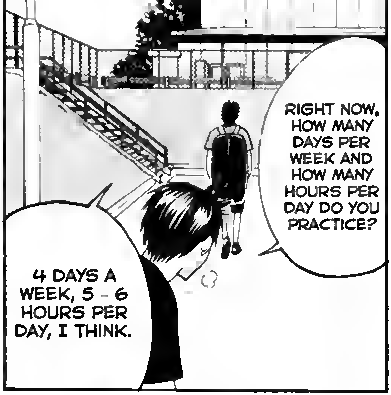
THIS REAL-
ITY!!


NIKE
THIS MATCH IS OVER.
PANT
PANT
GAME SET, 6 - 0, WON BY TAKUMA.


...
WE'RE DONE NOW, RIGHT? I'M GOING HOME.

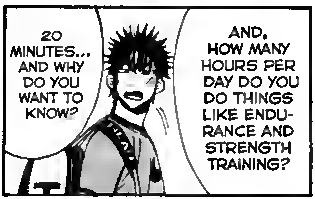
MARUO-KUN IS 15. HE'S AT A CRITICAL AGE IF HE'S AIMING TO MOVE ALONG THE SAME PATH AS TAKUMA.
TAKUMA IS 17. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT TIME FOR HIM IF HE WANTS TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL PLAYER.

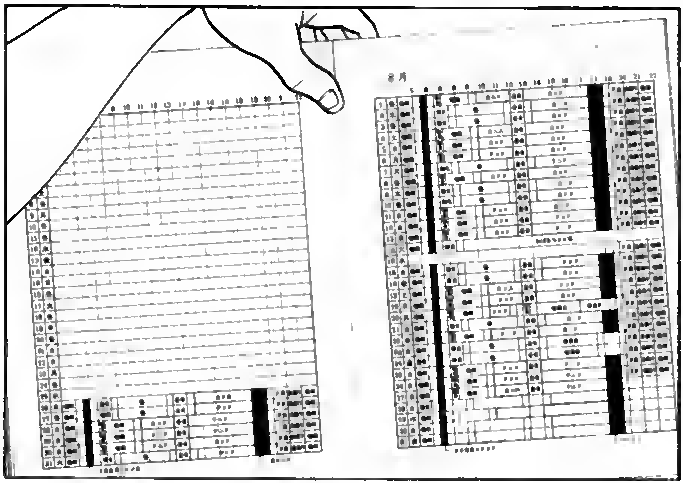
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN PLAYING TENNIS?
TAKUMA-SAN...
I WAS HOPING THAT THEY'D ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER, BUT IT MAY HAVE BEEN A LITTLE TOO SOON FOR MARUO-KUN...


RIGHT NOW, HOW MANY DAYS PER WEEK AND HOW MANY HOURS PER DAY DO YOU PRACTICE?
4 DAYS A WEEK, 5 - 6 HOURS PER DAY, I THINK.

I WAS 5.
Why are you asking?

AH!


20 MINUTES... AND WHY DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?
AND, HOW MANY HOURS PER DAY DO YOU DO THINGS LIKE ENDURANCE AND STRENGTH TRAINING?



WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?
P PLEASE GIVE THAT BACK.
A SCHE-DULE....!?
It's more hard-core than mine
PAD
EVEN WITH A SCHEDULE LIKE THIS, YOU SHOULD REALIZE THAT IT'S JUST NOT POSSIBLE.
YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD UN-DERSTAND.
NO MATTER HOW MUCH BETTER YOU GET FROM HERE ON, YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO BEAT ME.
Campus

HUH?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "HUH"?
IT'S JUST ...
I KNOW THAT I MAY NEVER GET GOOD ENOUGH TO BEAT YOU.
THE FACT IS THAT YOU'RE TOO STRONG. I HADN'T REALIZED JUST HOW STRONG,
BUT BECAUSE WE HAD OUR MATCH, I'M GLAD TO SAY THAT I KNOW NOW.
THEREFORE, FOR THE TIME BEING I'LL PUSH MY LIMITS WITH THIS SCHEDULE,
AND AFTERWARDS, I'LL REVIEW THINGS AND SEE FOR MYSELF IF IT'S TRULY IMPOSSIBLE.... OR AT LEAST, THAT'S MY PLAN.

WHY DID YOU DO THAT!?
ゴッ
?
NOW IT LOOKS LIKE I'M JUST RUNNING AWAY FROM THINGS BECAUSE I'M NOT DOING ANYTHING.
WHAT A JOKE.

I said, WHY ME!?
I'M IN YOUR HANDS!!
AFTER THAT, I PLAYED TENNIS EVERY SINGLE DAY.
WHAT!? Why me?
AND SO, WHENEVER YOU'VE GOT FREE TIME DURING SUMMER BREAK, I'D LIKE YOU TO PRACTICE WITH MARUO-KUN.
NO MATTER HOW MUCH TIME THERE WAS, IT WAS NEVER ENOUGH
SERVE, VOLLEY, CONTROL, AND PHYSICAL STRENGTH. THERE WERE AN INFINITE NUMBER OF OTHER THINGS TO WORK ON.
PLEASE!!
PLEA-SE!!
PLEASE!!

I COMPETED IN A CHAMPION-SHIP MATCH (GRADE 4), HOPING TO WIN.
AND DURING THE LAST 10 DAYS OF AUGUST,
RIGHT!!
HA!

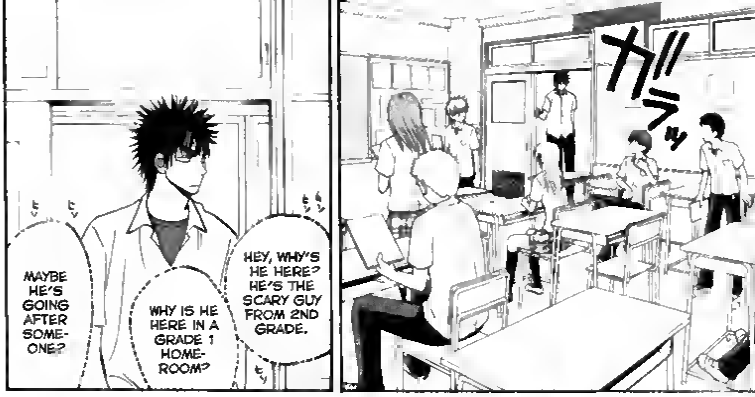
TO THE BACK! IT'S WIDE OPEN.
IS HE GOING TO GET IT!?
IT'S GOING IN!!

HE DOESN'T GIVE UP!
GAH!
FINALLY, SOME OPENINGS!!

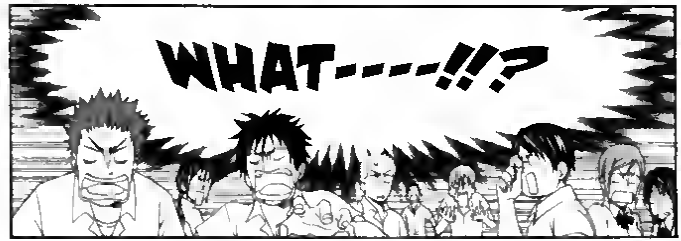
GAME, 5 – 4, MARUO.
GREAT! JUST LIKE PRACTICE.
CON-TROL!!
IT'S DEVEL-OPED INTO QUITE A MATCH.
WH... WHAT'S HE WRITING?
カキカキ
WRITE
PANT
THIS FIRST OPPONENT WAS A NON-SEEDED PLAYER, BUT -

WORN OUT
げんなり
FIRST VICTORY!!
GAME COUNT, 6 - 4, WON BY MARUO!
~~~ ~~YES
AL-THOUGH I'M STILL NOT ANY-WHERE NEAR TAKUMA-SAN'S LEVEL.
A TINY BIT OF PRO-GRESS....
I HEARD ABOUT HIM! HE'S THAT NEW STC PLAYER, THE "NOTE-BOOK GUY", RIGHT?
YOU'RE PLAYING HIM NEXT? WATCH OUT, HE DOESN'T GIVE UP.
IN THIS COMPETITION, I HAD ONE MORE WIN, SO IN ALL I COMPETED IN 3 ROUNDS.
I THINK THAT I AD-VANCED A LITTLE BIT.
AND WITH THAT, MY SUMMER BREAK ENDED.
~~~

キーンコーン
カーンコーン
PLEASE TURN IN YOUR SUMMER HOMEWORK.
ENGLISH HOMEWORK SHOULD BE HANDED TO SASAKI-SAN PLEASE.
ガヤ
ガヤ
じー
STARE
HM? WHAT'S WRONG, SASAKI-SAN?
WH.. HUH?! N... NOTHING'S WRONG!!


MAYBE HE'S GOING AFTER SOME-ONE?
WHY IS HE HERE IN A GRADE 1 HOME-ROOM?
HEY, WHY'S HE HERE? HE'S THE SCARY GUY FROM 2ND GRADE.
ガラッ

WHAT? TAKUMA-SAN?
OH, THERE YOU ARE.


WHAT----!!?

E... E-CHAN'S TALKING TO A JUVENILE DELINQUENT!!
Is he being bullied?
WHAT'S GOING ON?
you're in a grade 1 class room
APPARENTLY MIYAGAWA AND ARAYA ARE COMING TO STC TODAY TO PRACTICE AND COACH ASKED ME TO GIVE YOU A MESSAGE.
HE SAID, "IF YOU WANT TO PRACTICE WITH THEM THEN GET THERE EARLY".
YOU MEAN THAT I CAN PARTICIPATE TOO!?

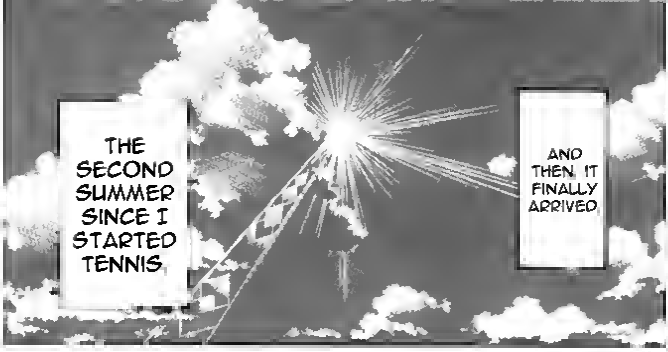
ANYWAY, THAT'S THE MESSAGE.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!

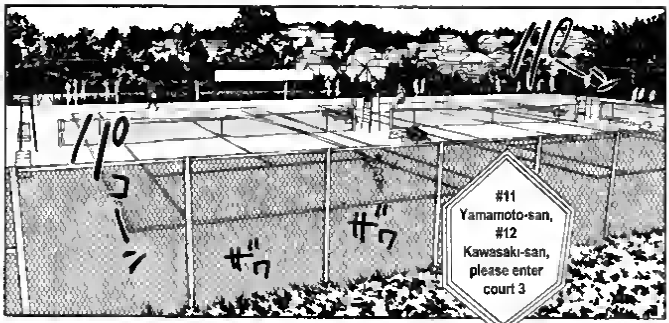
M... MARUO-KUN'S CHANGED..
Is E-chan ok ?
What's going on ?

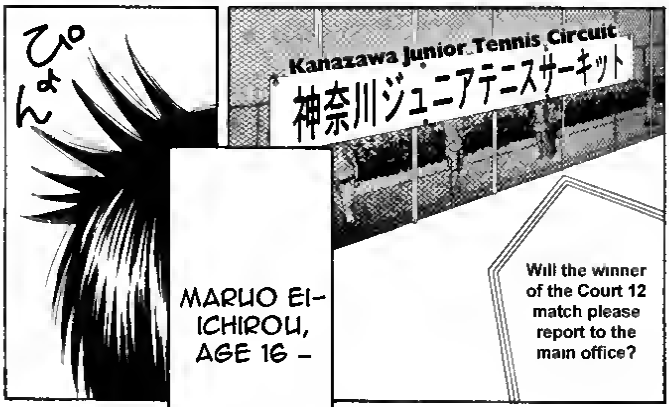
WAIT JUST A MINUTE, EIICHIROU!!
I'M LEAVING!
I'M HOME!
IT'S A LITTLE HECTIC BUT I'M MANAGING THEM BOTH..
I...I'M DOING FINE.
ARE YOU DOING OK WITH YOUR STUDIES?
TENNIS AGAIN? ISN'T THAT ALL YOU'VE BEEN DOING LATELY?
THAT CHILD'S EVER HAD SUCH A STRONG WILL TO DO SOMETHING.
...THOUGH ...I BELIEVE THIS IS THE FIRST TIME
I'M GOING NOW!!
ﾀｯ
.... OH MY.

NO MATTER HOW FAR MY GOAL IS,

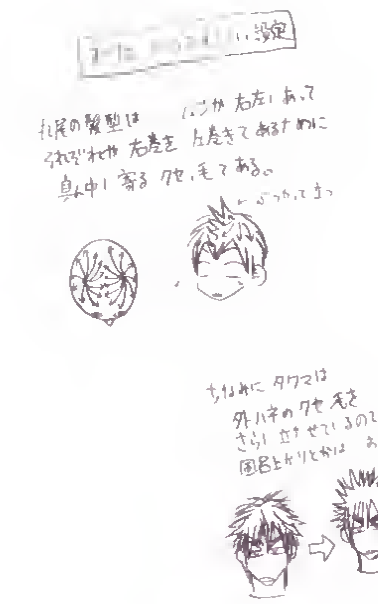
Aw
NO MATTER HOW SMALL THE STEPS I TAKE ARE
AS LONG AS I DON'T STAND STILL, SOMEDAY I'LL GET THERE.
SPRING ARRIVED, AND BY THEN I WAS ON MY 20TH NOTEBOOK
I HAD STABLE CONTROL OF MY SHOTS AS A RESULT OF MY REPETITIVE PRACTICE
BY WINTERTIME,
AUTUMN CAME,
AND I INCREASED MY RUNNING DISTANCE TO 5KM


THE SECOND SUMMER SINCE I STARTED TENNIS
AND THEN IT FINALLY ARRIVED

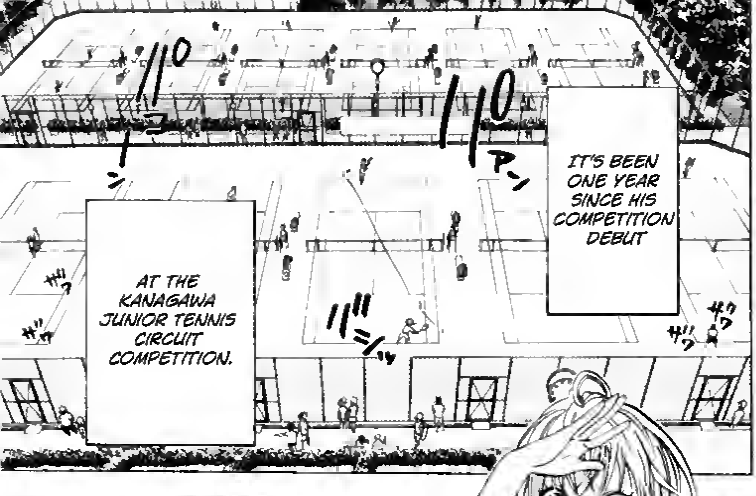

#11 Yamamoto-san, #12 Kawasaki-san, please enter court 3

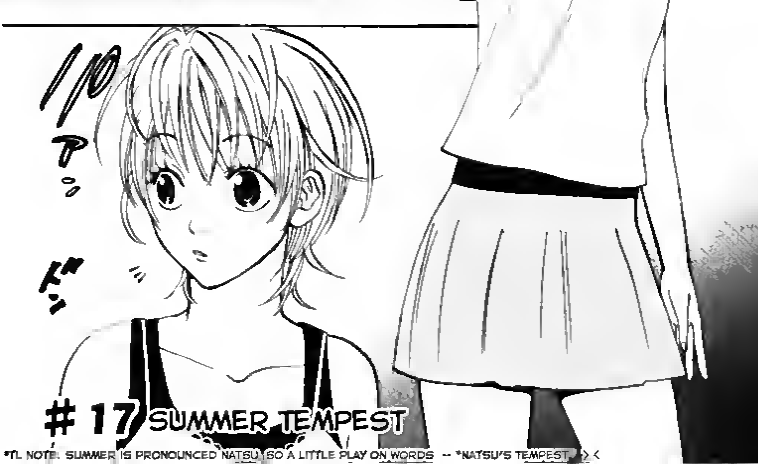

ぴょん
Kanazawa Junior Tennis Circuit
神奈川ジュニアテニスサーキット
MARUO EI-ICHIROU, AGE 16 –
Will the winner of the Court 12 match please report to the main office?

SANJOSE
Any players scheduled for the 10 00 meeting who have not reported in, please go to the main office at this time I repeat, --
TIME TO BREAK FREE AND LEAP FORWARD!!


設定
耳の髪型は
パンが 右左1 あって
それぞれが 左右を 片寄きてあるために
真ん中に 寄る クセ、もてある。
ぶつかって まっ
ちなみに タクマは
外ハネの クセ 毛を
さらに 立たせているので
風呂上がりとかは おでこない

Baby Steps





17 SUMMER TEMPEST

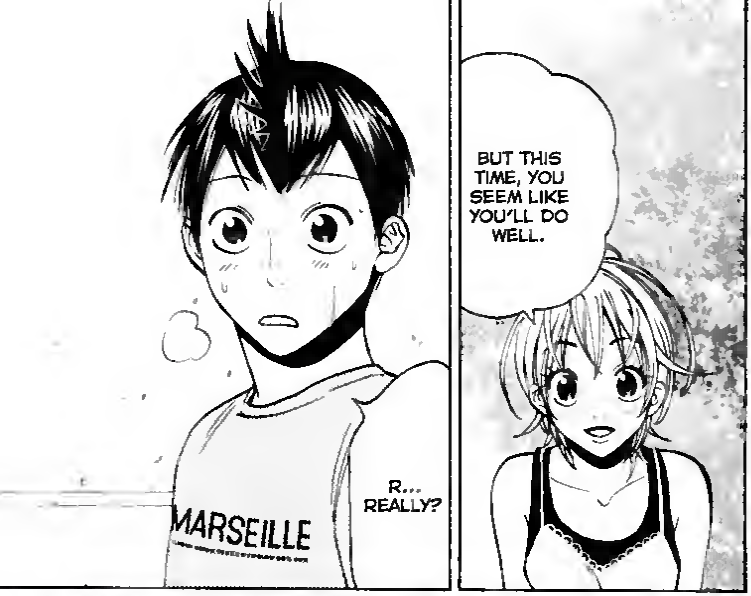
*TL NOTE: SUMMER IS PRONOUNCED NATSU, SO A LITTLE PLAY ON WORDS -- *NATSU'S TEMPEST. ^^<

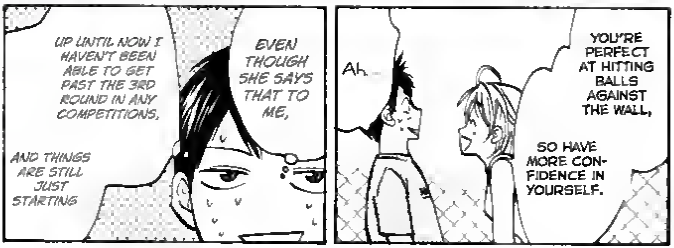
MARSEILLE
A BALL HITTING A WALL?
THAT RHYTHM... IT SOUNDS FAMILIAR.
..I MEAN, I HEAR IT EVERY DAY.
THERE HE IS.

ドン
110
アー

HE'S HITTING A SPOT 30CM ABOVE THE NET WITH THE SAME RHYTHM
THAT'S AMAZING.
AND ALTHOUGH HE'S BEEN DOING IT FOR A LONG TIME, HE HASN'T MISSED EVEN ONCE.
BUT "DOING IT FOR A LONG TIME"?
ISN'T THAT KIND OF BAD?
HOW TRUE! IF THEY HAD A "KANAGAWA WALL-HITTING CHAMPIONSHIP" HE'D DEFINITELY WIN

ゼーハーゼーハー
ゼーハーゼーハー
GUH
HEY, STOP! STOP!!
HE NEVER CHANGES ..
B..BUT...IF I DON'T DO SOMETHING I GET SO NERVOUS THAT I CAN'T STAND IT...
G.GOOD MORNING NAT-CHAN!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "GOOD MORNING"? WHAT'S THE POINT OF TIRING YOURSELF BEFORE YOU COMPETE? YOU'RE GOING OVERBOARD!!


MARSEILLE
R... REALLY?
BUT THIS TIME, YOU SEEM LIKE YOU'LL DO WELL.


UP UNTIL NOW I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET PAST THE 3RD ROUND IN ANY COMPETITIONS,
AND THINGS ARE STILL JUST STARTING
EVEN THOUGH SHE SAYS THAT TO ME,
Ah...
YOU'RE PERFECT AT HITTING BALLS AGAINST THE WALL,
SO HAVE MORE CONFIDENCE IN YOURSELF.

THIS COMPETITION HAS BEEN YOUR GOAL, AND YOU'VE WORKED REALLY HARD FOR IT.
OF COURSE YOU'RE GOING TO FEEL A LITTLE NERVOUS.

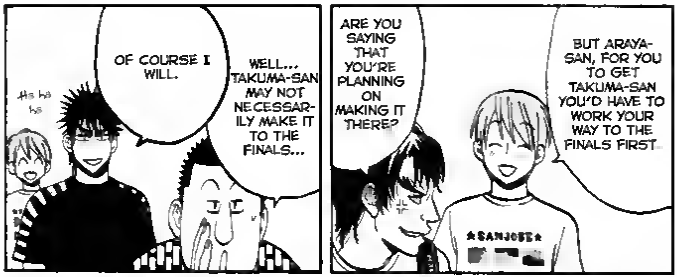
TRUE.
THAT'S RIGHT.... I -
LOST ONE YEAR AGO TO OOBAYASHI-KUN IN THE FIRST ROUND OF THIS COMPETITION.
I SET MY SIGHTS HERE AND PRACTICED.
RSEILLE

ザワ
ザワ
ドキドキ
GOOD MORNING ANIKI!!
YES, I WAS JUST WARMING UP A BIT.
ARE YOU OK? YOU'RE ALL SWEATY.
ALTHOUGH THE SEED ORDER'S A BIT DIFFERENT.
ANIKI!! WE'RE ALL IN THE LINE-UP THIS YEAR TOO!
MIYAGAWA-KUN! HOW ARE YOU?
OH! LONG TIME, NO SEE MARUO-KUN.
★SANJOSE★
DRIVE 4520

FIRST SEED IS EGAWA TAKUMA-SAN.
SECOND SEED IS ARAYA HIROSHI.
OOBAYASHI RYOU IS FOURTH SEED.
IWAKI HIROMI IS THIRD SEED.
FIFTH SEED IS MIYAGAWA TAKUYA.
ADD ME IN TOO, AND YOU'VE GOT THIS YEAR'S 6 HEAVENLY KINGS OF KANAGAWA!!
ISN'T IT USUALLY JUST 4 HEAVENLY KINGS?
BUT THEN I WOULDN'T BE INCLUDED.
WELL, THANKS FOR INCLUDING ME TOO, THEN.
....

ARAYA-KUN.
YO WHAT'S UP, EVERYONE?
SAME AS ALWAYS... WHY?
AND HOW ARE YOU FEELING, TAKUMA-SAN?
WOAH, ARAYA'S FIRED UP TODAY, TOO.
THAT'S THE REASON HE'S ACTING SO HOT-BLOODED.
I GUESS IT'S BECAUSE HE WANTS TO BE THE FIRST PLAYER TO DEFEAT TAKUMA SAN HERE
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "WHY"?
THAT'S NOT THE ATTITUDE THAT A FIRST SEED SHOULD HAVE TOWARD A SECOND SEED.

I'M FEELING REALLY GOOD TODAY.
SANJOSE

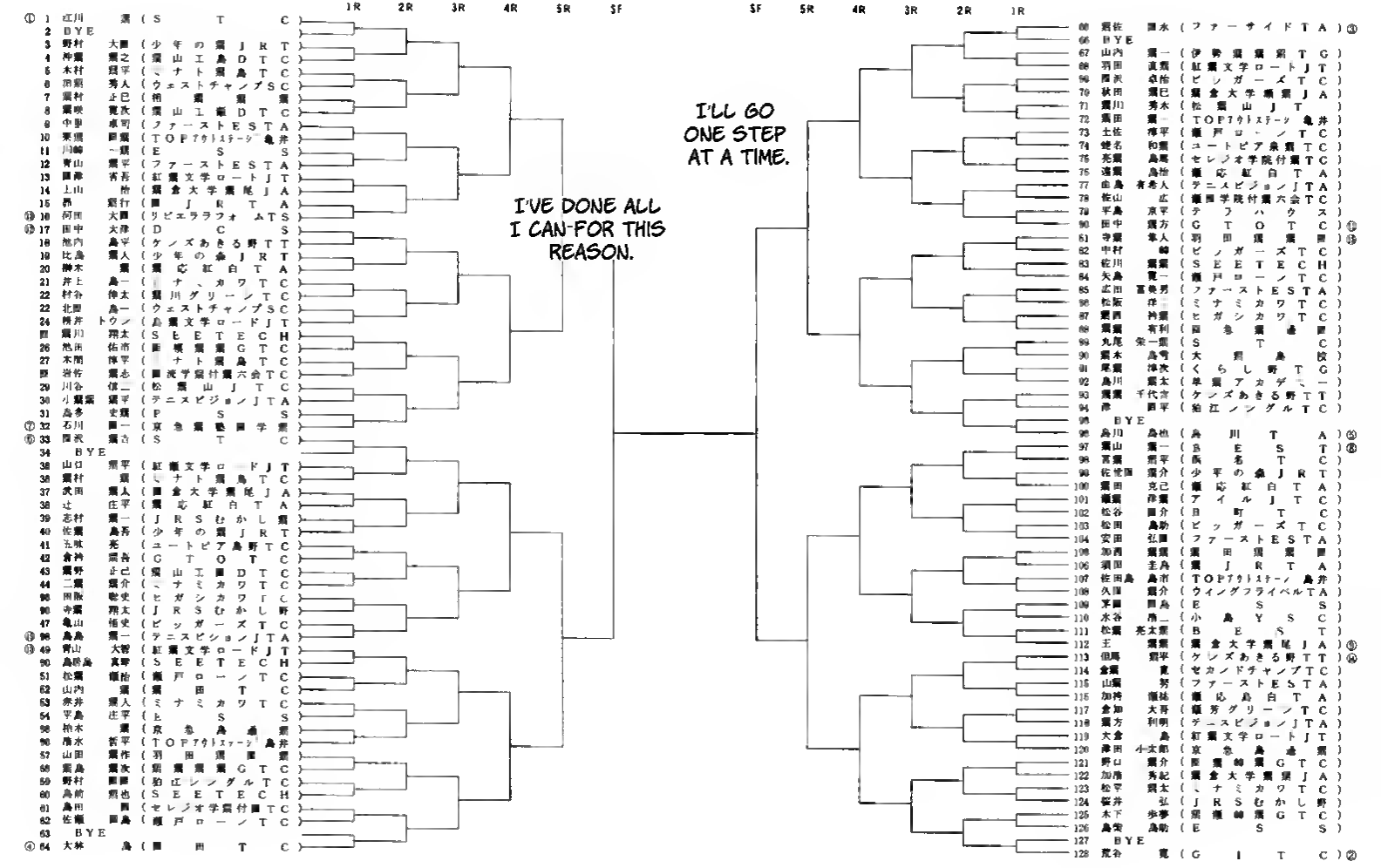

BUT ARAYA-SAN, FOR YOU TO GET TAKUMA-SAN YOU'D HAVE TO WORK YOUR WAY TO THE FINALS FIRST.
ARE YOU SAYING THAT YOU'RE PLANNING ON MAKING IT THERE?
WELL... TAKUMA-SAN MAY NOT NECESSARILY MAKE IT TO THE FINALS...
OF COURSE I WILL.
Ha ha ha
SANJOSE

WOW. NO ONE'S EVEN THINKING ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF LOSING
I ALSO...CAN'T LOSE IN MY HEART BEFORE I EVEN GET THE CHANCE TO FIGHT...!
ギュッ

HM... SINCE IT'S A COMPETITION, YOU HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO WATCH AND FIND OUT, BUT...
USUALLY IT ENDS UP GOING ALONG WITH THE SEED RANKINGS, RIGHT?
NAT-CHAN, WHO DO YOU THINK WILL WIN?
I'M SURE THAT E-CHAN WILL BECOME THE EYE OF THE TYPHOON.
★SANJOSE★
THIS SHOULD BE INTERESTING.
HM...SHE'S EXPECTING AN AWFUL LOT FROM YOU.
I JUST SAID WHAT I WAS THINKING.
Wh, wha what, Nat-chan!! What are you saying!?

FIRST THOUGH, YOU'LL HAVE TO GET TO US.
SANJOSE
DRIVE 4520

AGE 18 AND UNDER, MEN'S DIVISION.



ARE YOU DATING TAKASAKI-SAN?

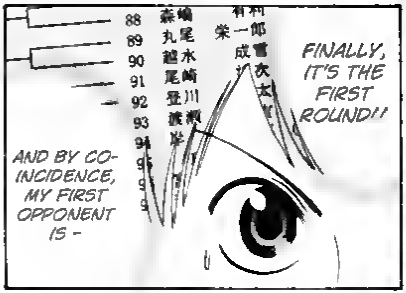
BY THE WAY, MARUO-KUN,

ANIKI...MIYAGAWA TENDS TO THINK OF THINGS AT HIS OWN PACE, SO DON'T BE SO SURPRISED BY IT.
WELL, IT'S BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT
IT'S BECAUSE YOU ASKED ME THAT OUT OF THE BLUE!!

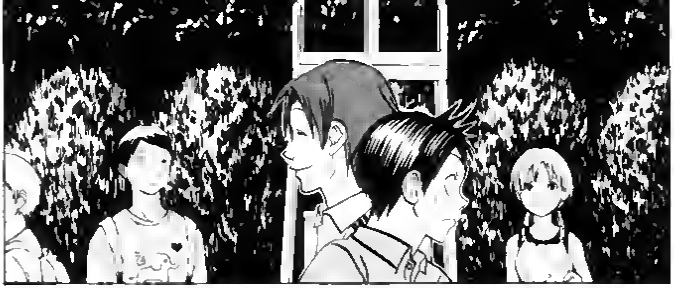
カぁぁぁ
YOU KNOW, YOU DON'T NEED TO DENY IT SO STRONGLY
NO....NO, I'M NOT!!

OK!! HERE I GO!!
GO FOR IT, E-CHAN!! YOU CAN DO IT!!

ATTENTION. 18 AND UNDER MEN'S DIVISION, 1ST ROUND WILL START MOMENTARILY. #89 MARUO EIICHIROU-KUN AND #90 KOSHIMIZU NARIYUKI-KUN, PLEASE ENTER COURT #6 --
ドォン


88 森丸
89 越尾
90 水崎
91 尾川
92 登瀬
93 岸
94
95
96
97
有利一郎
栄曹次太
成
FINALLY, IT'S THE FIRST ROUND!!
AND BY CO-INCIDENCE, MY FIRST OPPONENT IS -

KOSHIMIZU NARIYUKI, WHO IS IN THE TENNIS CLUB AT MY HIGH SCHOOL, OOSUGI HIGH.
MAY THE BEST MAN WIN.
HE'S IN THE SAME GRADE BUT OUR CLASSES ARE DIFFERENT SO I BARELY KNOW HIM
IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY THOUGH OUR TENNIS CLUB USUALLY GOES 2 – 3 ROUNDS IN THE PREFECTURAL COMPETITIONS
MAY THE BEST MAN WIN.
BEING AT STC, I'VE PRACTICED A LOT MORE THAN HE HAS
THERE'S NO WAY THAT I CAN LOSE!!
YOU'RE MARUO FROM CLASS 1, RIGHT?
I'M KOSHIMIZU, IN CLASS 4.
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D PLAY AGAINST SOMEONE FROM THE SAME HIGH SCHOOL HERE.
YES ...
NICE TO MEET YOU.
?
I HEARD THAT YOU WERE PLAYING AT STC, MARUO.
I WAS HOPING TO PLAY AGAINST YOU AT LEAST ONCE.



THERE'S NO WAY I'LL LOSE TO SOMEONE LIKE YOU.

!??

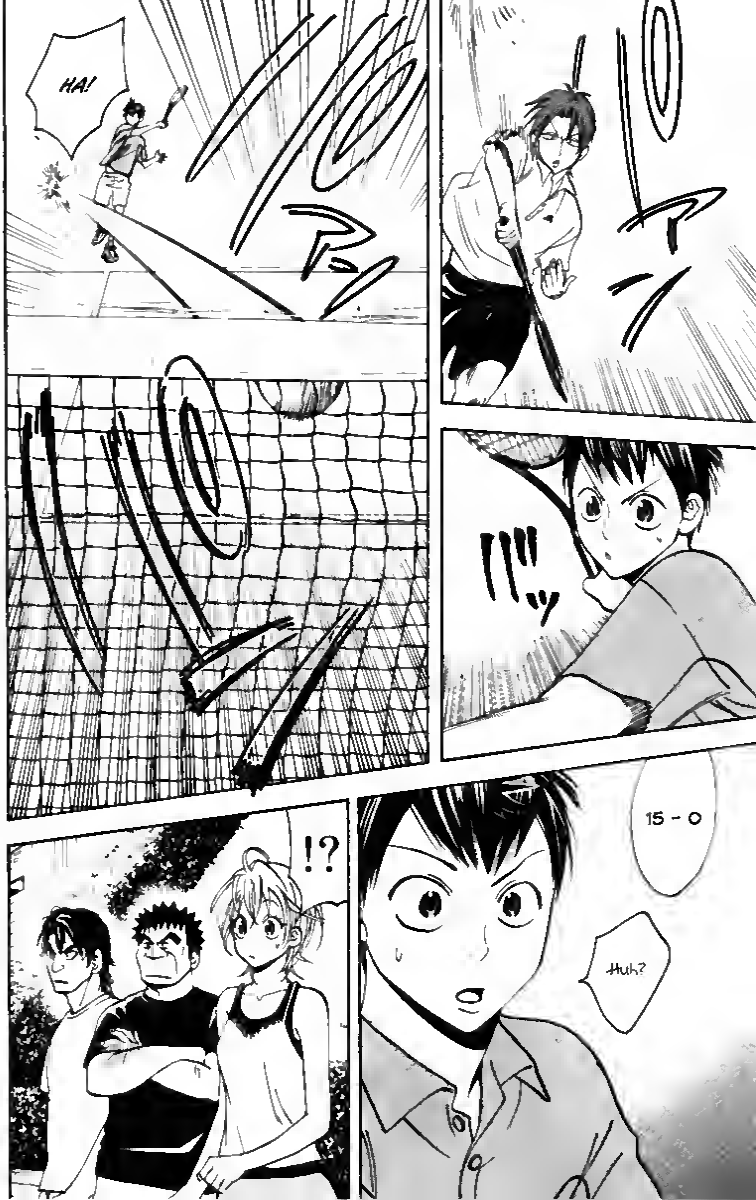
KANAGAWA JUNIOR TENNIS CIRCUIT, ROUND 1.
DID. .DID HE SAY SOMETHING JUST NOW?
1 SET MATCH, KOSHIMIZU SERVES.
PLAY!
MARUO EIICHIROU (5TC) VS KOSHIMIZU NARIYUKI (OOSUGI HIGH SCHOOL).

18 WHERE ARE YOU LOOKING?

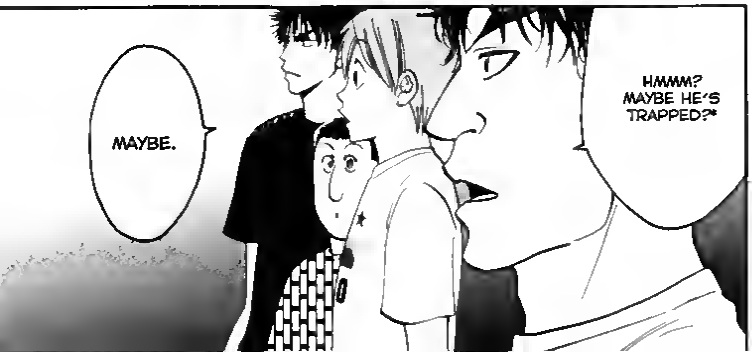
I AM
.....
WHAT A JOKE... AND WHAT'S WITH THAT DEMEANOR?
トーラトーン
IT MUST BE FATE THAT YOU STARTED PLAYING TENNIS... BECAUSE I'VE BEEN PLAYING SINCE JUNIOR HIGH.
YOU'RE SO OBLIVIOUS!!*
LOOKS AT GRADES RATHER THAN RANK
I AM THE MAN WHO IS YOUR RIVAL FOR TOP SCORE AT OUR SCHOOL!!
SO...WHAT THE HELL!! HOW CAN YOU LOOK AT ME LIKE I'M A STRANGER...
ON TOP OF THAT, LATELY I'VE BEEN DOING BETTER THAN YOU!!

*TL NOTE: ACTUALLY SAYS "YOU'RE MARCHING TO YOUR OWN BEAT TOO MUCH!" BUT SOUNDS RIDICULOUS AND STUPID (SRY. THIS IS FINE. =D)

WH... WHAT'S THAT ABOUT ...?
I SENSE A LOT OF HOSTILITY BUT I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING, HAVE I?
Stop! This is not the time to think about that!!
Think after the match!!
REPETITIVE TRAINING, STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE TRAINING... I'VE DONE ALL THAT I COULD.
IT'S TIME TO THINK ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED SINCE I LOST IN THE FIRST ROUND LAST YEAR!!
IN ORDER TO GET EVEN A LITTLE BIT CLOSER TO MY GOAL,
I HAVE TO WIN IN THIS FIRST ROUND!!

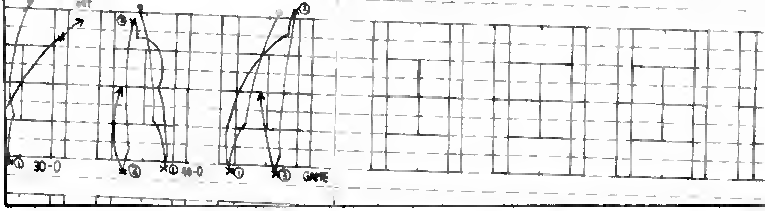

HA!
15 - 0
Huh?
!?

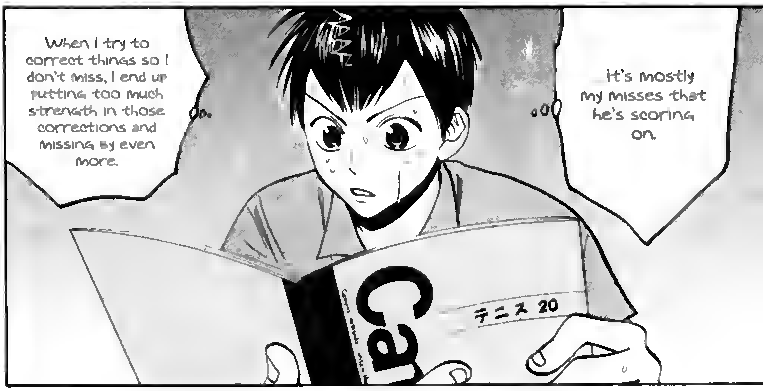
*T.N. NOTE: THIS SOUNDS ODD BUT IT'S EXPLAINED ON THE NEXT PAGE (FRAME 2)

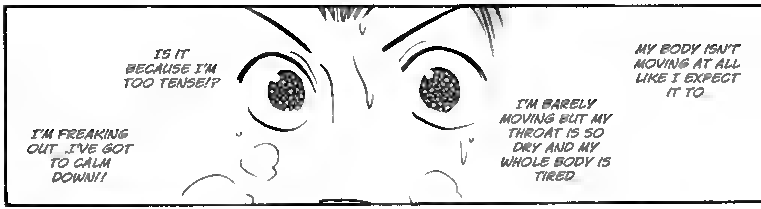


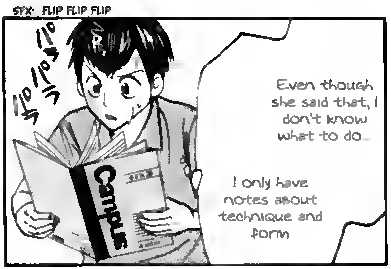
ONCE THIS HAPPENS, YOU'VE TRAPPED YOURSELF IN A VICIOUS CYCLE.
GUH
YOU TRY TO CORRECT YOURSELF BUT YOU DON'T USUALLY PLAY LIKE THAT,SO YOU KEEP MAKING MISTAKES.
WHEN YOU HAVE A STRONG DESIRE TO WIN, YOU END UP USING TOO MUCH STRENGTH AND IT INTERFERES WITH YOUR PLAY.
IT CAN HAPPEN WHEN YOU TELL YOURSELF, "I ABSOLUTELY HAVE TO WIN"
AND YOU CAUSE MENTAL STRESS.

.....
TO BE HONEST, IT'S NOT EASY.
IT'S ACTUALLY HARD TO PLAY AT YOUR NORMAL STRENGTH WHEN YOU'RE PLAYING AN IMPORTANT GAME.
GAME, KOSHIMIZU. GAME COUNT 3 - 0
110
Eh? Notes?
WERE THOSE JUST RUMORS THEN?
HOW DISAPPOINTING ...HE'S FROM STC, AND I HEARD THAT HE PLAYED HARD BUT IT'S NOT TRUE AT ALL.
SFX: TWIRP
Phew


30-0
40-0
GAME


When I try to correct things so I don't miss, I end up putting too much strength in those corrections and missing by even more.
It's mostly my misses that he's scoring on.
テニス 20


IS IT BECAUSE I'M TOO TENSE!?
I'M FREAKING OUT. I'VE GOT TO CALM DOWN!!
I'M BARELY MOVING BUT MY THROAT IS SO DRY AND MY WHOLE BODY IS TIRED
MY BODY ISN'T MOVING AT ALL LIKE I EXPECT IT TO


SFX: FLIP FLIP FLIP
Even though she said that, I don't know what to do...
I only have notes about technique and form

THIS COMPETITION HAS BEEN YOUR GOAL, AND YOU'VE WORKED REALLY HARD TOWARD IT
OF COURSE YOU'RE GOING TO FEEL A LITTLE NERVOUS

If you get too stressed out

To get nervous or tense is just proof that you have a really strong desire to win.

When it comes to competitions,

this is a good feeling to have!

So, instead of focusing too much on yourself,

make sure you look at your opponent!!

You can do it!

DON'T FOCUS ON MYSELF, AND INSTEAD LOOK AT MY OPPONENT?
It's good to feel nervous or tense for competitions?
Wh, what is this?
Campus

NOW THAT I THINK OF IT.. I'VE HEARD PEOPLE SAY, "THAT WAS A GOOD TENSE MATCH".

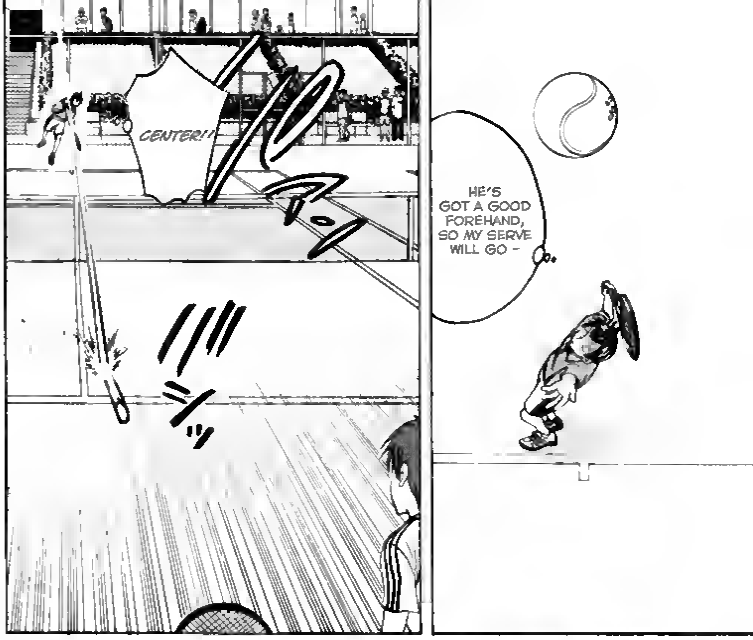
I DEFINITELY WANT TO WIN, SO IS IT A GOOD THING TO BE SO TENSE?

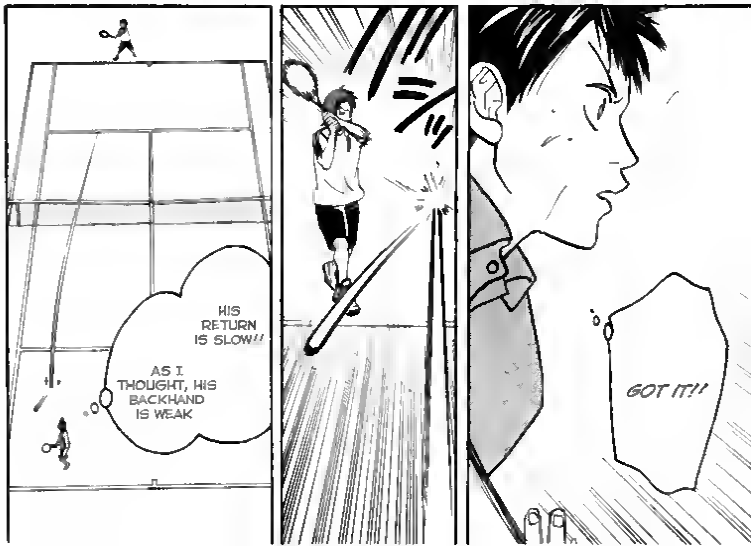
THAT'S RIGHT!!

I'M DEFINITELY FOCUSING ENTIRELY ON MYSELF RIGHT NOW, AND I HAVEN'T WATCHED MY OPPONENT AT ALL.

WHAT ARE MY OPPONENT'S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES? WHAT KIND OF GAME DOES HE PLAY? I HAVEN'T THOUGHT AT ALL ABOUT THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS!!

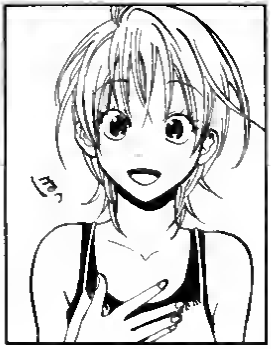
THANK YOU, NAT-CHAN!
TIME!
KOSHIMIZU NARIYUKI!!


CENTER!!
HE'S GOT A GOOD FOREHAND, SO MY SERVE WILL GO -


HIS RETURN IS SLOW!!
AS I THOUGHT, HIS BACKHAND IS WEAK
GOT IT!!

EH?
HE MOVED UP FRONT
THIS IS A CHANCE BALL, SO I'LL HIT IT WHERE HE'LL HAVE TO RETURN WITH A BACKHAND!!
THERE! FROM THIS ANGLE, HE CAN'T CROSS!!

IT WAS OVER BEFORE I COULD EVEN GET GOING
15 - 0


ITS

I HAVE THE FEELING HE WAS ABLE TO OVERCOME SOME OBSTACLE,
THOUGH I HAVE NO IDEA HOW.
HUH? DID HE SUDDENLY GET GOOD OR SOMETHING?
#SANJOSE
DRIVE 4520

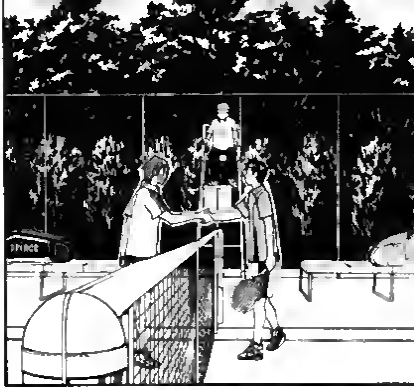
IT'S A FIRST POINT VERY FITTING FOR MARUO-KUN.
IT'S NOT VERY FLASHY, BUT IT'S GOOD TENNIS.

OF COURSE HIS TENNIS PLAYING HAS CHANGED.
RUNNING, STRENGTH TRAINING, AND REPETITIVE CONTROL TRAINING... HE'S SPENT THE LAST YEAR EARNESTLY WORKING HARD.
NOW HIS LOWER BODY HAS BECOME STRONGER,
AND THIS HAS INCREASED HIS CONTROL FURTHER
HE USED TO RELY SOLELY ON THE STRENGTH OF HIS "EYES" TO COVER THE COURT,
BUT HE'S FINALLY ABLE TO RELY ON HIS BODY AS WELL.

CONTROL AND COVERING THE COURT,
THE WAY HE PLAYS IS INFLUENCED BY HIS EARNEST AND METHODICAL PERSONALITY.
THIS MAY BE A SURPRISING NEW STYLE OF TENNIS THAT WE'RE SEEING.

GAME SET
WON BY
MARUO,
COUNT
6 – 3.

Shit I didn't know he was so strong.

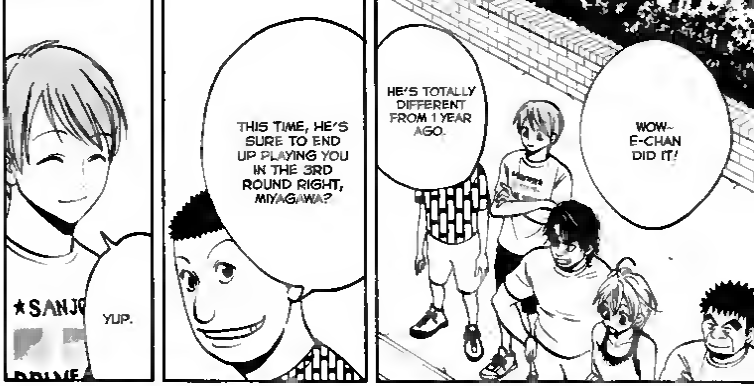

PRINCE

THE NOTEBOOK YOU WERE LOOKING AT DURING OUR MATCH...WHAT WAS IT?
ACTUALLY, I WANTED TO ASK YOU SOMETHING, TOO

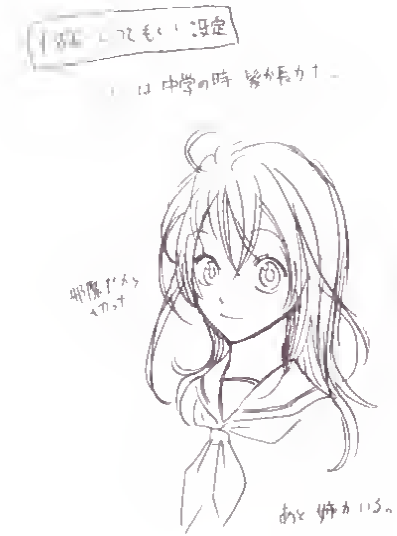
UH... UH... N... NO, I DIDN'T... I WAS JUST SAYING SOMETHING TO ENCOURAGE MYSELF, SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT
UHM... I'M REALLY SORRY BUT DID YOU SAY SOMETHING BEFORE WE STARTED PLAYING? I COULDN'T HEAR YOU

STUFFED
prince
Campus
OH... THEY'RE TENNIS NOTES.

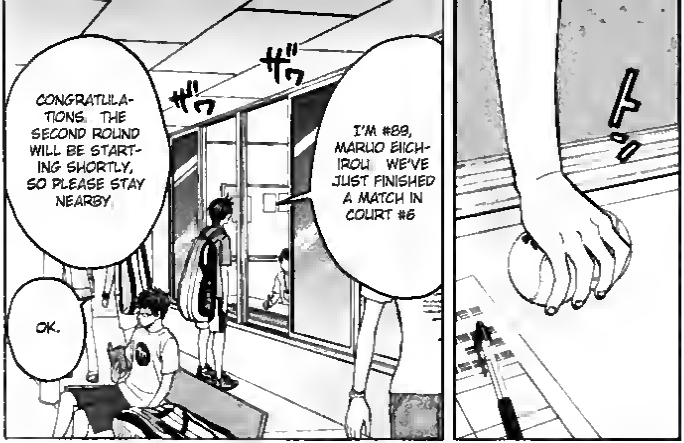
AMAZING...
YOU'RE THINKING I'M WEIRD, AREN'T YOU...?
ALL OF THEM?
?
I CAN'T BEAT HIM.
— FINALLY, YOU REMEMBERED MY NAME
HUH?
IN RETURN, MAYBE YOU CAN GIVE ME SOME POINTERS, NARIYUKI-SAN?
HUH? SURE, I WILL.
CAN YOU SHOW ME THOSE AT SCHOOL SOME TIME?

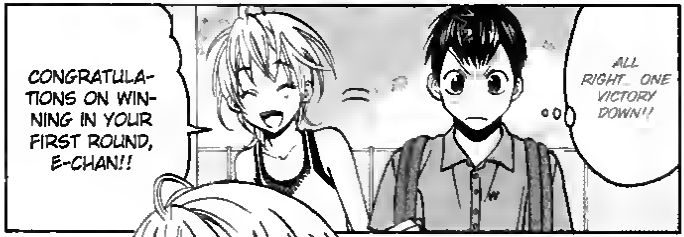

YUP.
THIS TIME, HE'S SURE TO END UP PLAYING YOU IN THE 3RD ROUND RIGHT, MIYAGAWA?
HE'S TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM 1 YEAR AGO.
WOW- E-CHAN DID IT!

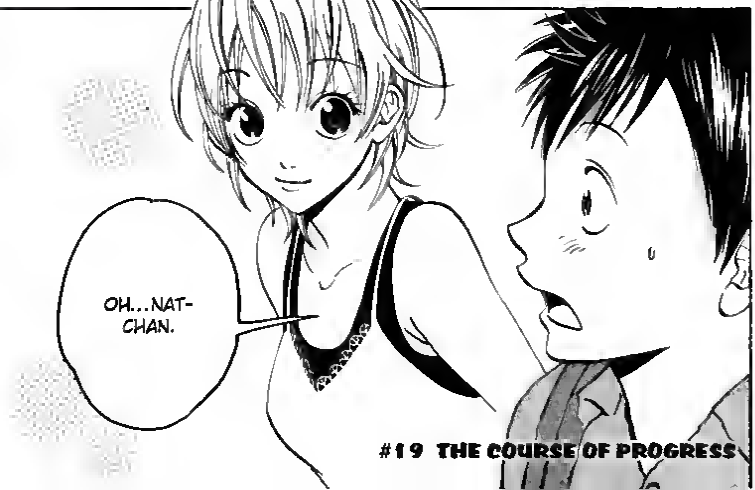
BUT
I FOUND HIS WEAKNESS.
I'M GOING TO GIVE IT MY ALL IN THE NEXT MATCH TOO!!
I THINK IT'S GOING TO BE A FUN MATCH.


1話 とってもいい設定
1は中学の時髪が長かった
制服がブレザーだった
あと姉がいる。

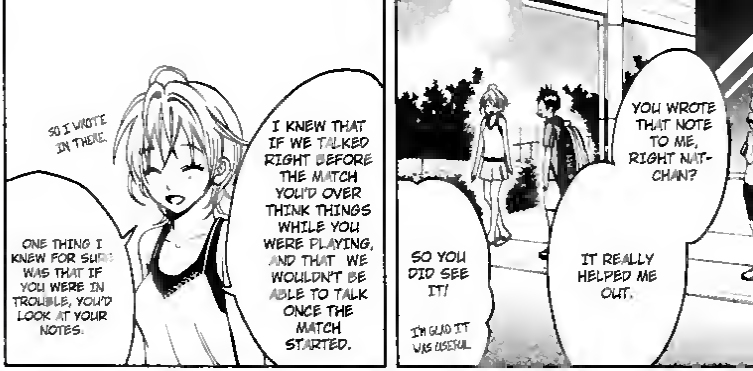
Baby Steps

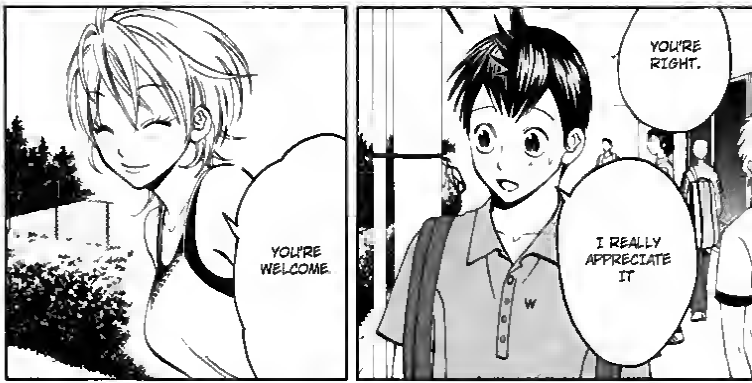

I'M #89, MARUO EICHIROU. WE'VE JUST FINISHED A MATCH IN COURT #6
CONGRATULATIONS. THE SECOND ROUND WILL BE STARTING SHORTLY, SO PLEASE STAY NEARBY.
OK.

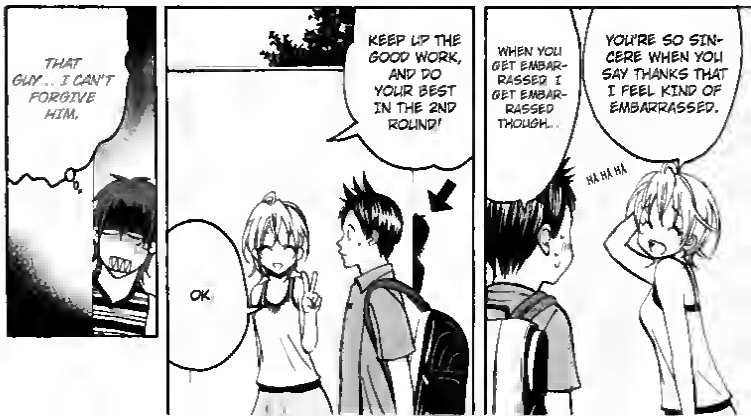




#19 THE COURSE OF PROGRESS


I KNEW THAT IF WE TALKED RIGHT BEFORE THE MATCH YOU'D OVER THINK THINGS WHILE YOU WERE PLAYING, AND THAT WE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO TALK ONCE THE MATCH STARTED.
SO I WROTE IN THERE.
ONE THING I KNEW FOR SURE WAS THAT IF YOU WERE IN TROUBLE, YOU'D LOOK AT YOUR NOTES.
YOU WROTE THAT NOTE TO ME, RIGHT NAT-CHAN?
IT REALLY HELPED ME OUT.
SO YOU DID SEE IT!
I'M GLAD IT WAS USEFUL


YOU'RE WELCOME.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
I REALLY APPRECIATE IT


THAT GUY... I CAN'T FORGIVE HIM.
KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK, AND DO YOUR BEST IN THE 2ND ROUND!
OK.
WHEN YOU GET EMBARRASSED I GET EMBARRASSED THOUGH...
YOU'RE SO SINCERE WHEN YOU SAY THANKS THAT I FEEL KIND OF EMBARRASSED.
HA HA HA

UNDERSTANDING THAT FEELING NERVOUS OR TENSE COULD BE AN ADVANTAGE MADE A BIG DIFFERENCE.
GUH
*10 MARUO-KUN AND *12 NOBORIKAWA-KUN, PLEASE ENTER COURT *5.
GAME SET, 6 - 1 WON BY MARUO.
JUST AS I DID IN ROUND 1, I WON ROUND 2!!

HE'S FINALLY STARTED PLAYING SERIOUSLY TOO.
MIYAGAWA'S ABOUT TO START PLAYING HIS MATCH IN COURT#3.
YU-KICHI-KUN
YOU'RE DOING REALLY WELL, ANIKI.
RIGHT
I WAS JUST THINKING OF GOING OVER TO WATCH.
THIS IS MY CHANCE TO CHECK HIM OUT!
I KNOW A LITTLE BIT ABOUT HOW MIYAGAWA PLAYS FROM PRACTICES, BUT I'VE NEVER STUDIED HIM WHILE HE PLAYED AN ACTUAL MATCH.
I'M SURE THAT MIYAGAWA IS GOING TO WIN!!
THIS MATCH WILL DETERMINE MY NEXT OPPONENT

HA!!!
!!
IT SEEMS LIKE THE OUTCOME IS PRACTICALLY DECIDED.
HIS OPPONENT IS COMPLETELY HELPLESS.

MIYAGAWA TAKUYA, 5TH SEED IN THIS COMPETITION.

HA!!
NATIONAL JUNIORS, 14 AND UNDER, IN THE BEST 16 WITH HIS SPECTACULAR RECORD, AND
CURRENTLY RANKED 5TH IN THE KANAGAWA PREFECTURAL JUNIOR RANKINGS.
KANAGAWA JUNIOR CIRCUIT, 18 AND UNDER DIVISION, 4TH PLACE.
PRINCE JUNIOR, 16 AND UNDER DIVISION, WINNER.

HIS WEAPONS ARE THE FOREHAND AND BACKHAND STROKES THAT MAKE USE OF HIS 180CM HIGH STATURE
NOT ONLY IS HE ABLE TO HIT HARD BUT HIS SHOTS ARE GOOD AND HE RARELY MISSES
ALTHOUGH ONLY IN 1ST GRADE OF HIGH SCHOOL, HE'S ONE OF THE BEST EXAMPLES OF A BASELINER PLAYING IN THE KANAGAWA JUNIOR CIRCUIT
TO PUT IT PLAINLY, HE'S STRONG!!

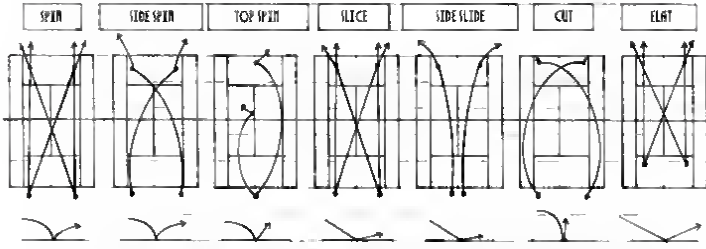
MIYAGAWA LEADS, 5 - 0.
HM?
WHAT'S HE DRINKING?
IS THAT A THERMOS?
IT'S KELP TEA
KELP TEA!?
HE ALWAYS DRINKS KELP TEA AND EATS PICKLED PLUMS DURING HIS MATCHES WHILE ON HIS BREAK
AS YOU MIGHT EXPECT, THIS TENDS TO ANNOY HIS OPPONENTS WHO ARE TRYING SO EARNESTLY TO WIN
NO KIDDING
OF COURSE HE DRINKS SPORT DRINKS TOO, BUT...
WHAT ELSE DO YOU HAVE WRITTEN DOWN ABOUT MIYAGAWA?
PLEASE SHOW IT TO ME
HM. I SEE
WRITE WRITE WRITE
AS FOR THE PICKLED PLUMS, THEY SAY THAT THEIR CITRIC ACID CONTENT HELPS WITH RECOVERING FROM FATIGUE
SUPPOSEDLY, DRINKING TOO MANY COLD DRINKS LOWERS THE SALINITY CONCENTRATION IN YOUR BLOOD AND THEN YOU GET TIRED IT'S SAID THAT DRINKING SOMETHING WARM SLOWLY REPLENISHES YOU INSTEAD

MIYAGAWA TAKUYA

MIYAGAWA T, A GROUP 15 YEARS OLD

BASELINER WHO PLAYS WITH VERY STRONG FOREHAND AND BACKHAND USING BOTH RIGHT AND LEFT HANDED STROKES.

HIS DISTINCTIVE FEATURE IS HIS WIDE VARIETY OF STROKES.



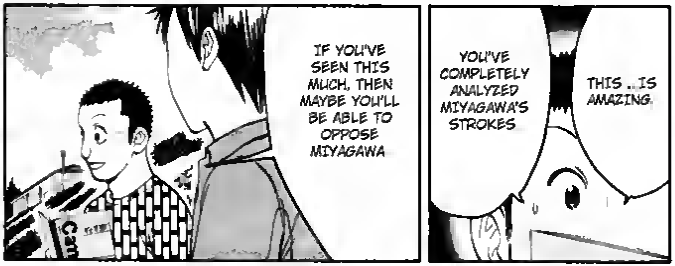
COMMENTS

SPIN ... REGULAR USED IN OVER HALF HIS SHOTS, USED IN ALMOST ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

*SIDE SPIN ... A LOT OF CROSSES FROM THE LEFT AND RIGHT.

*TOP SPIN ... USES WHEN HIS OPPONENT MOVES TO THE FRONT.

*I NOTICE, ACTUALLY SAYS "CIRCUMSTANCES", BUT THAT SOUNDS SILLY!!>


IF YOU'VE SEEN THIS MUCH, THEN MAYBE YOU'LL BE ABLE TO OPPOSE MIYAGAWA
YOU'VE COMPLETELY ANALYZED MIYAGAWA'S STROKES
THIS ..IS AMAZING

OH.. BUT THIS PART'S A BIT OFF.
WHAT!? WHERE!?
WELL, I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT THAT
JUST WATCHING ISN'T ENOUGH, YOU KNOW
I REALIZED THAT BACK WHEN I PLAYED OOBAYASHI-KUN

IF HE WASN'T VERSATILE, THEN HE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO HIT 7 DIFFERENT TYPES OF STROKES, WOULD HE...?
NO, IT'S QUITE THE OPPOSITE.
I DON'T THINK YOU CAN SAY THAT HE'S VERSATILE.
WHY NOT?
THE ONLY THING HE IS GOOD AT ARE THOSE STROKES,
MEANING THOSE STROKES ARE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY FOR HIM.
!?
YOU'D THINK THAT ENVIRONMENT WOULD BE ENVIED BY ANYONE WHO WAS AN EXPERT TENNIS PLAYER, RIGHT?
THAT... THAT'S INCREDIBLE.
IT JUST SO HAPPENS THAT HE'S THE SON OF A FAMILY THAT OWNS A TENNIS CLUB
SO IT SEEMS THAT HE'S BEEN PLAYING TENNIS FOR HIS ENTIRE LIFE.
THE MIYAGAWA T.A. CLUB

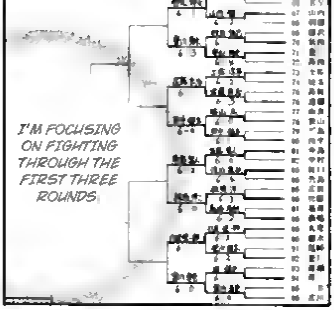
HOWEVER, THAT WASN'T THE CASE WITH MIYAGAWA.
APPARENTLY HE HAD A HARD TIME WITH SOFT BALL TOUCHES, OR ESTIMATING DISTANCES...ALL THOSE THINGS THAT SHOULD HAVE COME NATURALLY....
HE WAS AN UNSKILLED CHILD.
HOWEVER, IF YOUR FAMILY MAKES A LIVING FROM IT, THEN IT'S NOT SO SIMPLE FOR THE CHILD TO JUST QUIT, RIGHT?
OF COURSE, I'M SURE THAT HIS STUBBORNNESS PLAYED A PART, TOO.
AND SO, HE PUT EVERYTHING HE HAD INTO THOSE HARD-HITTING STROKES INSTEAD.

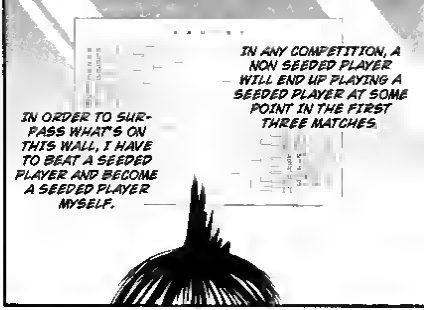
A HARD-HITTING STROKE RELIES LESS ON YOUR ABILITY TO SENSE THINGS AND INSTEAD REQUIRES A LOT OF PRACTICE.
THAT'S WHERE HE FOCUSED.
HE'S GOTTEN THAT STRONG NOW.
AND LATELY HIS VOLLEY ISN'T BAD EITHER
THEY SAY HE'S THE "STAR OF HOPE" OF MIYAGAWA T.A.
BUT MIYAGAWA AND I ARE ON FRIENDLY TERMS, AND I SENSE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN HIM AND ANIKI.
I IMAGINE IT TOOK A LOT OF TIME AND EFFORT FOR HIM TO GET THAT STROKE PERFECT.
THAT'S TRUE . I UNDERSTAND, BECAUSE THERE ARE PLENTY OF AREAS THAT I'M UNSKILLED IN, TOO
GAME SET, 6 - 0, WON BY MIYAGAWA.

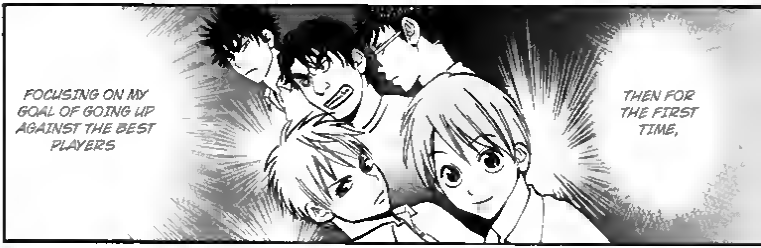
LOOKS LIKE THE GAME'S ENDED.
ANIKI, YOUR NEXT OPPONENT IS
MIYAGAWA

prince
HE'S FINALLY GONE INTO BATTLE MODE, I SEE.
.....

KANAGAWA JUNIOR TENNIS CIRCUIT, 2ND ROUND
IT'S FINALLY COME!
6-2
6-3
6-1
6-2
6-1
6-0
6-0
6-2
6-1
BUT IF I TELL MYSELF THAT THEN I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO WIN A 3RD ROUND MATCH
I GUESS IT'S NATURAL FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO THINK THAT
IT'S A GIVEN THAT MIYAGAWA'S GOING TO WIN THIS BLOCK
WELL, UNTIL HE GETS TO THE FINALS IT LOOKS LIKE MIYAGAWA'S GOT IT PRETTY EASY. HE'S LUCKY

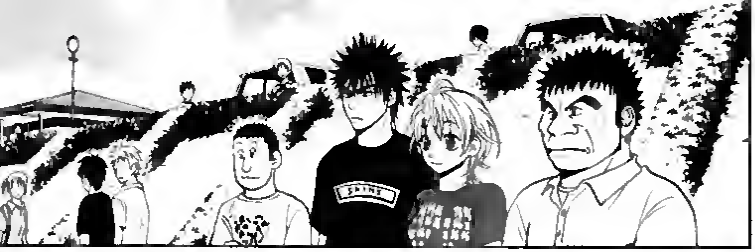

I'M FOCUSING ON FIGHTING THROUGH THE FIRST THREE ROUNDS


IN ANY COMPETITION, A NON SEEDED PLAYER WILL END UP PLAYING A SEEDED PLAYER AT SOME POINT IN THE FIRST THREE MATCHES.
IN ORDER TO SURPASS WHAT'S ON THIS WALL, I HAVE TO BEAT A SEEDED PLAYER AND BECOME A SEEDED PLAYER MYSELF.


FOCUSING ON MY GOAL OF GOING UP AGAINST THE BEST PLAYERS
THEN FOR THE FIRST TIME,

#89 MAKUO-KUN AND #96 MIYAGAWA-KUN, PLEASE ENTER COURT #3

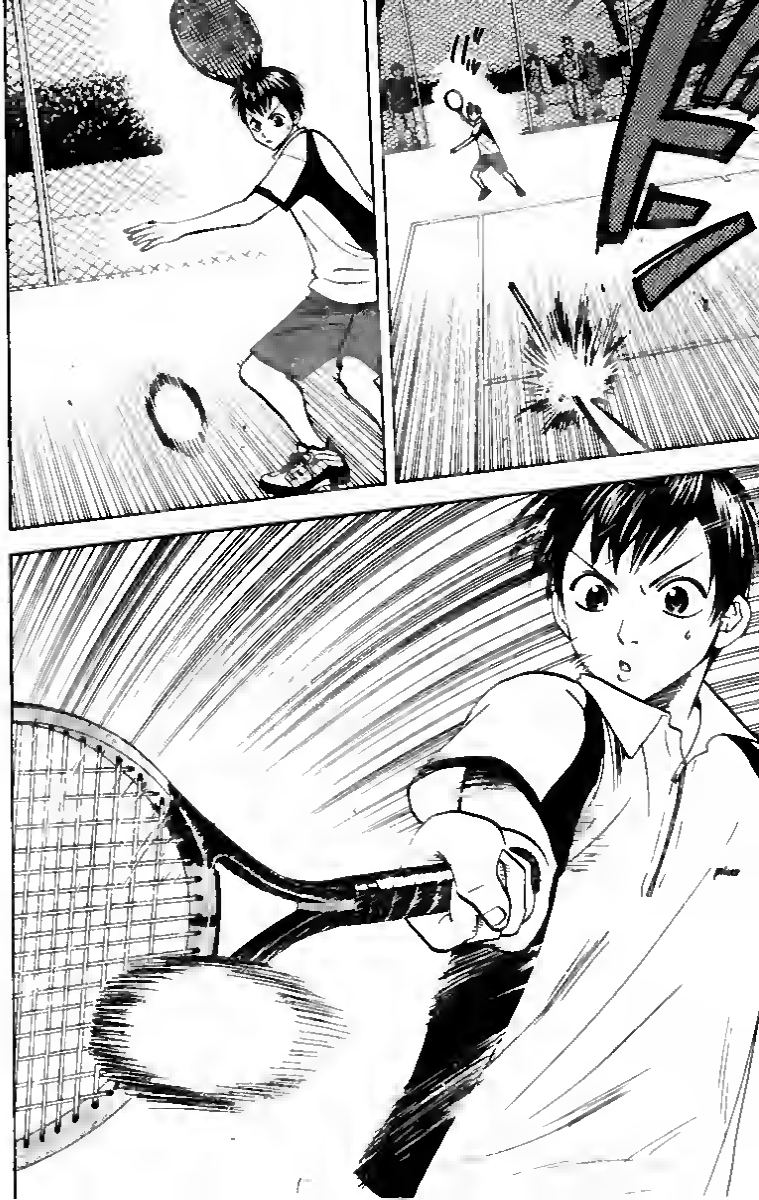
TO SEE HOW FAR I CAN GO AGAINST MIYAGAWA,
THIS WILL TEST HOW FAR I'VE PROGRESSED IN THE PAST YEAR
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS BATTLE!!



OK. I'LL SERVE FIRST.
FINE, THEN I'LL TAKE COURT.

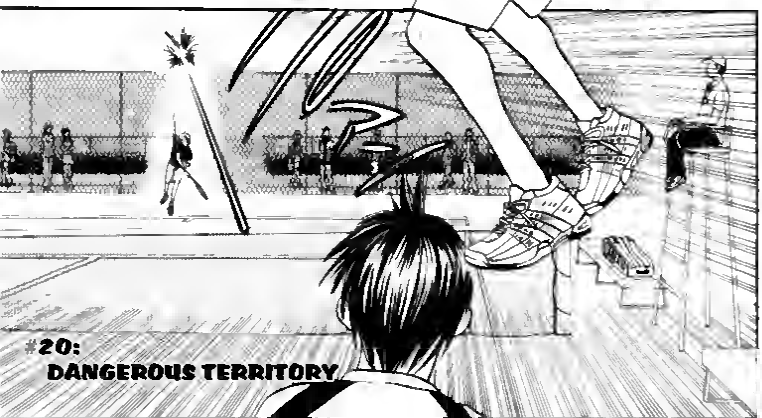
!
I WONDER WHY...I'M TENSE, BUT I FEEL REALLY CALM.
I THOUGHT I'D BE A LOT MORE NERVOUS BEFORE THE MATCH.

I WANT TO HURRY UP AND FIGHT!!
MAY THE
BEST MAN WIN!
1 SET MATCH, MIYAGAWA SERVES. PLAY!



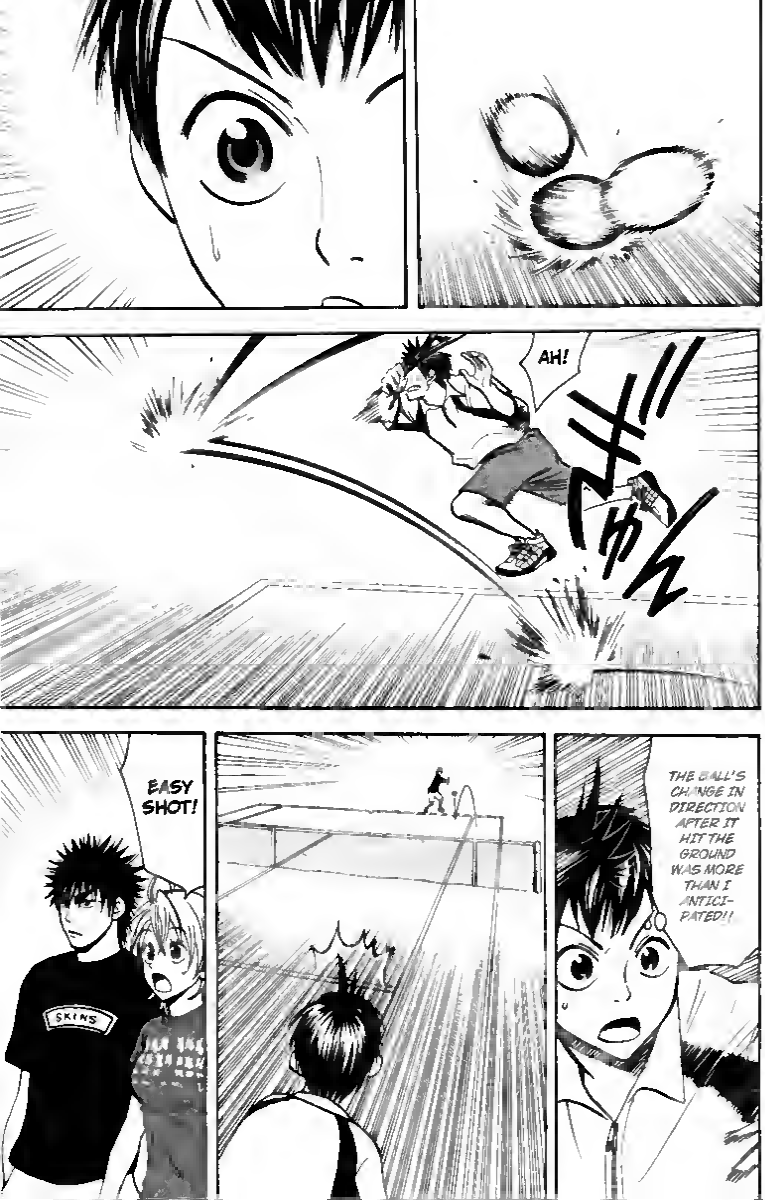
めちゃくちゃ どうでもいい設定
影山は実は
ものすごく将棋が
強いとか、
あと 数学だけは
赤尾より点数いいとか
名前が
小次郎
だとか
似てる妹がいるとか

Baby Steps



20:
DANGEROUS TERRITORY

GAH!
THE BALL IS DROPPING AND GOING TO THE RIGHT!!


AH!
EASY SHOT!
SKINS
THE BALL'S CHANGE IN DIRECTION AFTER IT HIT THE GROUND WAS MORE THAN I ANTICI-PATED!!

CROSS
FLAT BALL!
SHIT!
HA!
UH

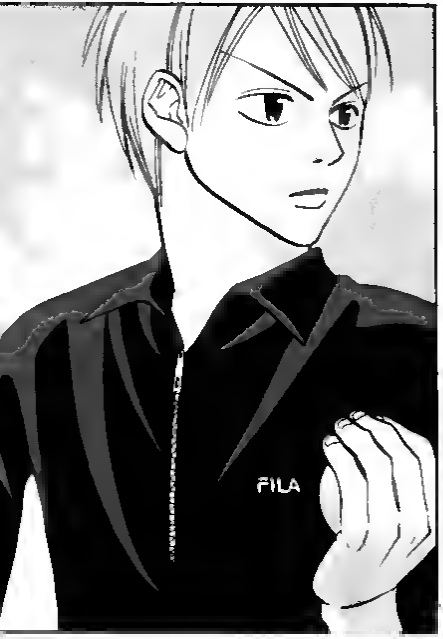
WOAH! WHAT STRE-NGTH!!
15 - 0
AS EX-PECTED OF MIYAGAWA —HE'S A DEMON WITH HIS STROKES!
EVEN IF I KNOW WHERE IT'S GOING I CAN'T GET THE BALL
HE'S TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM ANYONE ELSE I'VE PLAYED
IT'S JUST LIKE THAT TIME I PLAYED AGAINST TAKUMA-SAN.
THIS IS THE TRUE STRENGTH OF KANAGAWA'S TOP CLASS!!

I HAVE TO KEEP IN MIND THAT THE BALL WILL CHANGE DIRECTIONS MORE THAN EXPECTED AND BE SURE TO PREDICT ITS PATH VERY CAREFULLY...
PLUS HE'S GOT 6 OTHER TYPES OF STROKES STILL.
THAT'S RIGHT...!! THEN...
FIRST, I'LL START WITH HIS SERVES, WHICH DON'T CHANGE DIRECTION MUCH. THAT'S WHERE....
I'LL AIM!!

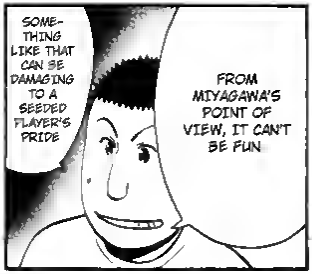
GUH
NICE RETURN!!
!!
IF I THROW HIM OFF, THEN HIS BALLS DON'T CHANGE DIRECTION AS MUCH!
HIT THIS TO THE OPEN SPACE...
CONTROL!!

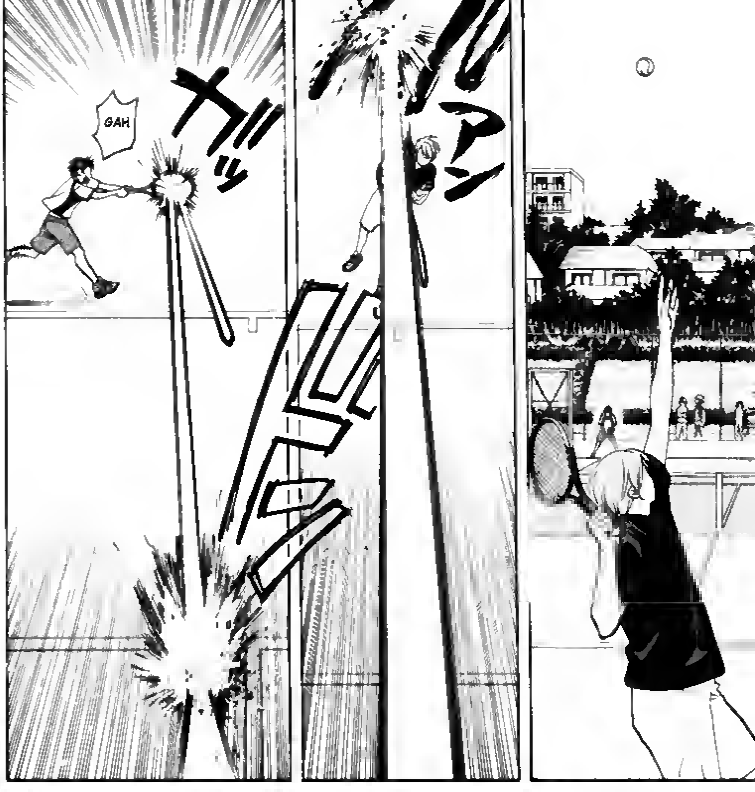
I GOT IT!!
I CAN KEEP UP WITH THIS PACE!
15-15
!

I'M DOING IT...
I'M ACTUALLY PLAYING AGAINST 5TH SEED MIYAGAWA....
THIS IS HOW FAR I'VE COME IN 1 YEAR!!


FILA

YES!! E-CHAN'S AWESOME!! THINGS LOOK GOOD!!
THAT WAS GOOD JUDGMENT ON HIS PART. HE'S ATTACKING WITH HIS TRADITIONAL ACCURACY.


SOMETHING LIKE THAT CAN BE DAMAGING TO A SEEDED PLAYER'S PRIDE
FROM MIYAGAWA'S POINT OF VIEW, IT CAN'T BE FUN


GAH

!!
!!
!!!
NICE SERVE!!
SO FAST!

7 YEARS AGO –
I CAN'T DO SO MANY THINGS ALL AT ONCE!
I'M DOING MY BEST BUT I CAN'T WIN IT'S BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE ANY TALENT ISN'T IT?
I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE FRUSTRATED FROM LOSING EVERY SINGLE TIME BUT YOU'RE DOING YOUR BEST
STOP GETTING SO ANGRY IT TAKES MORE THAN BEING TALENTED TO WIN A MATCH
TELL ME TAKUYA
DON'T YOU THINK THAT THE REASON YOU'RE GETTING YOURSELF TOO WORKED UP IS BECAUSE WE OWN A TENNIS CLUB?
YOU SHOULD JUST DO THINGS AT YOUR OWN PACE.
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS YOU'RE NOT AT AN AGE YET WHERE WE CAN TELL MUCH ABOUT YOUR TALENT.

DON'T TAKE IT SO SERIOUSLY.
I ALWAYS LOSE.
SINCE I WAS BORN, THERE'S ALWAYS BEEN THIS HUGE YARD IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE, AND
AND YOU'RE TELLING ME NOT TO TAKE IT SO SERIOUSLY?
IT'S A NORMAL THING TO HAVE 1-ON-1 MATCHES THERE.
WHAT CAN I DO...
HOW CAN I BECOME STRONG?
HOW CAN I NOT TAKE IT SERIOUSLY!?
MAYBE HE'S JUST PISSED OFF BECAUSE HE CAN NEVER WIN?
WH WHAT'S HE DOING? HE'S HITTING EVERYTHING WITH A FULL SWING, ISN'T HE?
ブン
ブン
ブン

THE STROKE IS THE ONE THING THAT I DON'T NEED MUCH TALENT IN.
IF I CAN MAKE THEM ALL FULL SWINGS, THEN I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT SENSING THE STRENGTH OF THE HIT.
GAH
AND ALTHOUGH CONTROL IS HARDER,
I'LL JUST KEEP PRACTICING UNTIL I CAN COVER FOR IT!!
HA
THIS IS MY TENNIS!!
ONE DAY ALL MY HITS WILL BE FULL SWING STROKES, AND I'LL BE ABLE TO HIT THE BALL ANYWHERE!!

HAH!!

30-15
OH MY GOD...WHAT WAS THAT JUST NOW!?
HOW THE HELL DOES SOMETHING LIKE THAT STAY IN BOUNDS?
NO IDEA.
....
AMAZING...
WHAT ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO DO WHEN YOU'RE UP AGAINST A STROKE LIKE THAT?
I'M SURE THAT WHAT MIYAGAWA-KUN JUST SHOWED NOW WAS HIS TRUE STROKE
IF HE EVER HIT ME HEAD ON, IT WOULD BE ALL OVER ...

BUT... THIS IS WHY I'VE AIMED FOR THIS PERSON!!

IF YOU CAN RETRIEVE EVERY BALL AND CONTROL IT,
THEN THEO-RETICALLY, YOU CANNOT LOSE!!

HA!
ANOTHER FLAT CROSS!
COME!

HA
GAH
NICE CATCH!!

Ah
HEY, HE'S ACTUALLY RETURNING MIYAGAWA'S STROKES.
GAH
HA
WHEN IT COMES TO STROKE STRENGTH, MIYAGAWA WINS BY A LOT
HOWEVER, THE REASON THAT MARUO-KUN IS ABLE TO COUNTERACT IT IS
BECAUSE OF HIS SPECIAL ABILITY TO COVER THE COURT AND REACH THE BALL, AND

WITH THAT KIND OF ABILITY, IT'S HARD TO MAKE A DECISIVE SHOT, REGARDLESS OF HOW POWERFUL IT IS.
ALSO HIS ABILITY TO CONTROL THE BALL AND SEND IT BACK TO AN OPEN SPOT IN THE COURT.
THERE IS A CHANCE FOR VICTORY HERE.
THE DEMON OF STROKES
VS
COURT COVERING AND CONTROL
AND THAT CHANCE
ALL DEPENDS ON HOW MARUO-KUN CONQUERS HIS WEAKNESS.

THERE IS A CHANCE FOR VICTORY HERE,
AND THAT CHANCE
ALL DEPENDS ON HOW MARUO-KUN CONQUERS THAT WEAKNESS.
DAMN!
GAME, MIYAGAWA 1 - 0
#21: HYPOTHESIS

* SERVE KEEP: WHEN THE SERVING PLAYER TAKES THE GAME. USUALLY THE PLAYER WHO IS SERVING HAS THE ADVANTAGE.

Ah
WHAT A CHANGE IN DIREC-TION!!
IT'S COMING TOWARDS ME
NEXT IS A SLICE!! THE BALL'S TRAJEC-TORY WILL BE SHALLOW!!

WILL... WILL I MAKE IT!?
LOOKS LIKE HE'S GOING TO THE RIGHT!

GAH!
15 - 0
WOAH!!
HE JUST MADE IT, AND ON TOP OF THAT HE SENT IT THE OPPOSITE WAY!!
HE ACTUALLY GOT A POINT FROM MIYAGAWA WITH THAT WIMPY HIT.
IT'S HIS CONTROL!! HIS CONTROL IS REALLY GOOD!!
YES!! NICE SHOT, E-CHAN!! HE'S ACTUALLY FIGHTING MIYAGAWA-KUN WITH HIS SERVE GAME!!
MAYBE ...
.....

COACH...WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS E-CHAN'S WEAKNESS THAT YOU WERE REFERRING TO EARLIER?
HEY, COACH !!
HE'LL TALK FOREVER IF HE STARTS ON THAT.
IT'S EVERYTHING ELSE BESIDES COURT COVERING AND CONTROL
THAT'S JUST YOUR POINT OF VIEW, TAKUMA.

MARUO-KUN HAS REALLY IMPROVED OVER THIS PAST YEAR
HUH?
SERVES, RETURNS, STROKES, VOLLEY, SMASH, LOB
HE'S PROPERLY PRACTICED EACH AND EVERY SHOT

HE PRACTICED THEM EQUALLY AND IMPARTIALLY ...SO
SOUNDS LIKE E-CHAN
BECAUSE OF THAT, THERE AREN'T ANY SHOTS COMING AT HIM THAT ARE HIS TRUE WEAKNESS.
THAT'S A GREAT THING, BUT

IN CONTRAST, HE POSSESSES NO PROMINENT WEAPONS.
IN OTHER WORDS, HE HAS NO WINNING SHOT.
THE RETURNS ARE THE BEST, BUT MAINLY WHEN RETURNING A SERVE, IT IS A DEFENSIVE MOVE MAKING IT A WINNING SHOT IS DIFFICULT.
HUH?
YOU KNOW THIS TOO, NATSU.
AS THE LEVEL OF COMPETITION INCREASES, THE PROPORTION OF POINTS TAKEN FROM WINNING SHOTS RATHER THAN THE OPPONENT'S MISSES INCREASES AS WELL.
30 - 30
OF COURSE, THIS MEANS THAT THE PLAYER POSSESSING A WINNING SHOT IS THAT MUCH MORE LIKELY TO PROGRESS FORWARD, RIGHT?

IN THE MIDST OF THIS, THOUGH, HE'S DOING WELL.
BUT...BUT... YOU CAN DO IT, E-CHAN...!!

AH!
IT'S A TOP SPIN, BUT THE BALL WILL BOUNCE A BIT TO THE OUTSIDE!

HA
IT WASN'T OBVIOUS AT FIRST, BUT HE'S GOT GOOD CONTROL TOO!!
A TOPSPIN HIT THAT BOUNCES UP FOLLOWED BY A SLICE WHERE THE BALL BARELY BOUNCES UP AT ALL!!
SLICE AGAIN!! NO SPRING TO IT!!

!!
NEXT IS THE FAST AND STRONG FLAT HIT!
OUT!
GAME MARUO! 1-1

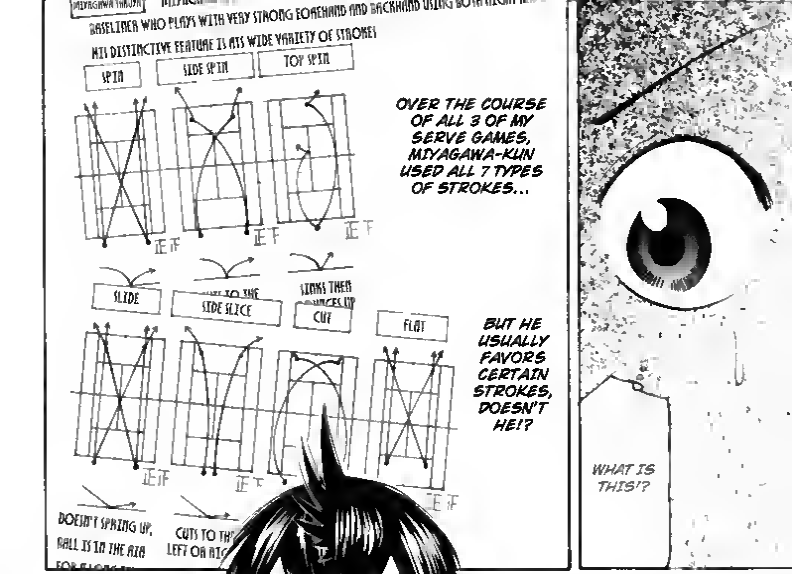
EVEN THOUGH THIS WAS A SERVE GAME WHERE I HAD TO HOLD ON TIGHTLY TO THE LEAD POSITION
I MANAGED TO SOMEHOW KEEP,
WE WEREN'T EVEN EQUALS... HE SEEMED WEAKER
BUT I DON'T FEEL LIKE I WON THIS GAME SIMPLY BY RETURNING HIS SEVEN-COLORED STROKES

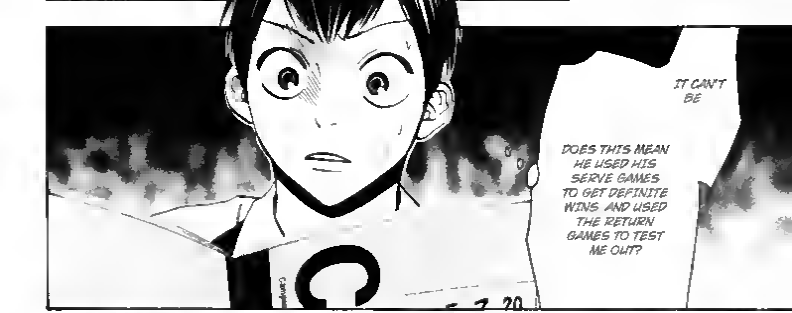
IN MIYAGAWA'S SERVE GAMES, MIYAGAWA HELD ON TIGHTLY TO THE LEAD POSITION AND SOUNDLY KEPT THE GAME.
HA!
IN EIICHIROU'S SERVE GAMES, EIICHIROU USED HIS COURT COVERING AND CONTROL SKILLS DESPERATELY, AND BY FIGHTING THROUGH REPEATED 40-40 SCORE GAMES, HE MANAGED TO SOMEHOW KEEP HIS GAME
AT THIS POINT, MIYAGAWA YUUSEI WAS SCORING AT THE SAME RATE THROUGH SERVE KEEP GAMES, AND THE TWO REMAINED TIED.
THE MATCH WAS READY TO MOVE INTO THE 5TH GAME.
カキ カキ
4
3

BUT WHAT'S THIS? THIS ANXIETY...
THIS HORRIBLE FEELING?
.....
I...I'M SOME-HOW MANAG-ING TO KEEP.

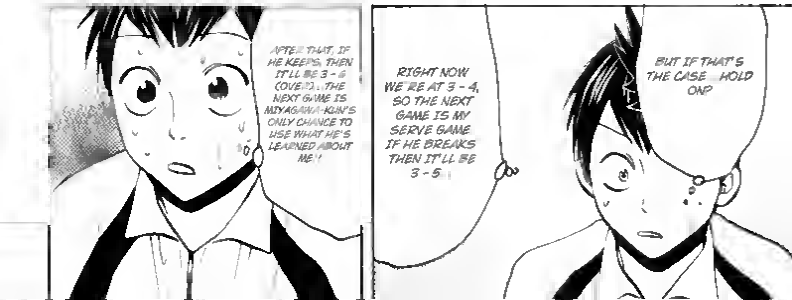
AM I JUST GETTING LUCKY TODAY? CAN I REALLY BELIEVE IT'S JUST THAT?
4 3
THERE HAVE BEEN SOME PAINFUL DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS MATCH, BUT THE SCORE REMAINS TIED AND HASN'T GONE ONE WAY OR THE OTHER YET
LOOKING AT MY NOTES DOESN'T HELP EITHER
パラ パラ パラ
EVEN IF I DID STUDY HIS SEVEN-COLORED STROKES BEFORE THE MATCH, IT STILL SEEMS TO BE GOING TOO WELL. DOESN'T IT?
HUH?
IT WOULDN'T MAKE SENSE FOR MIYAGAWA-KUN TO TAKE IT EASY ON ME AT THIS POINT
AM I OVER-THINKING IT?
Campus
. . . . . HUH?

I WAS THINK-ING,
MIYAGAWA ISN'T USING HIS RETURN GAME AND ENGAGING IN ANY LONG DRAWN OUT BATTLES HERE...
HOWEVER, TO ACCOMPLISH THIS WHAT HE NEEDS IS INFORMATION ON THE OPPONENT'S HABITS DURING A REAL MATCH
I THOUGHT SO -- THIS IS THE FIRST TIME MIYAGAWA AND ANIKI HAVE GONE UP AGAINST EACH OTHER SO AS A SEEDED PLAYER. HE SHOULD BE USING WHATEVER TECHNIQUES HE NEEDS IN ORDER TO ENSURE A WIN.
HUH?
SEEMS LIKE YOU'RE RIGHT
IF MIYAGAWA WAS TO USE HIS RETURN GAME TO CAREFULLY OBSERVE THIS THEN...
HITTING HIS SEVEN-COLORED STROKES TO ANIKI AND
SEEING WHICH STROKES HE WAS GOOD AT RETURNING AND WHICH ONES HE STRUGGLED WITH.


MIYAGAWA TAKUYA
BASELINER WHO PLAYS WITH VERY STRONG FOREHAND AND BACKHAND USING BOTH HIGH
HIS DISTINCTIVE FEATURE IS HIS WIDE VARIETY OF STROKES
SPIN
SLICE SPIN
TOP SPIN
SLIDE
SIDE SLICE
CUT
FLAT
OVER THE COURSE OF ALL 3 OF MY SERVE GAMES, MIYAGAWA-KUN USED ALL 7 TYPES OF STROKES...
BUT HE USUALLY FAVORS CERTAIN STROKES, DOESN'T HE!?
WHAT IS THIS!?



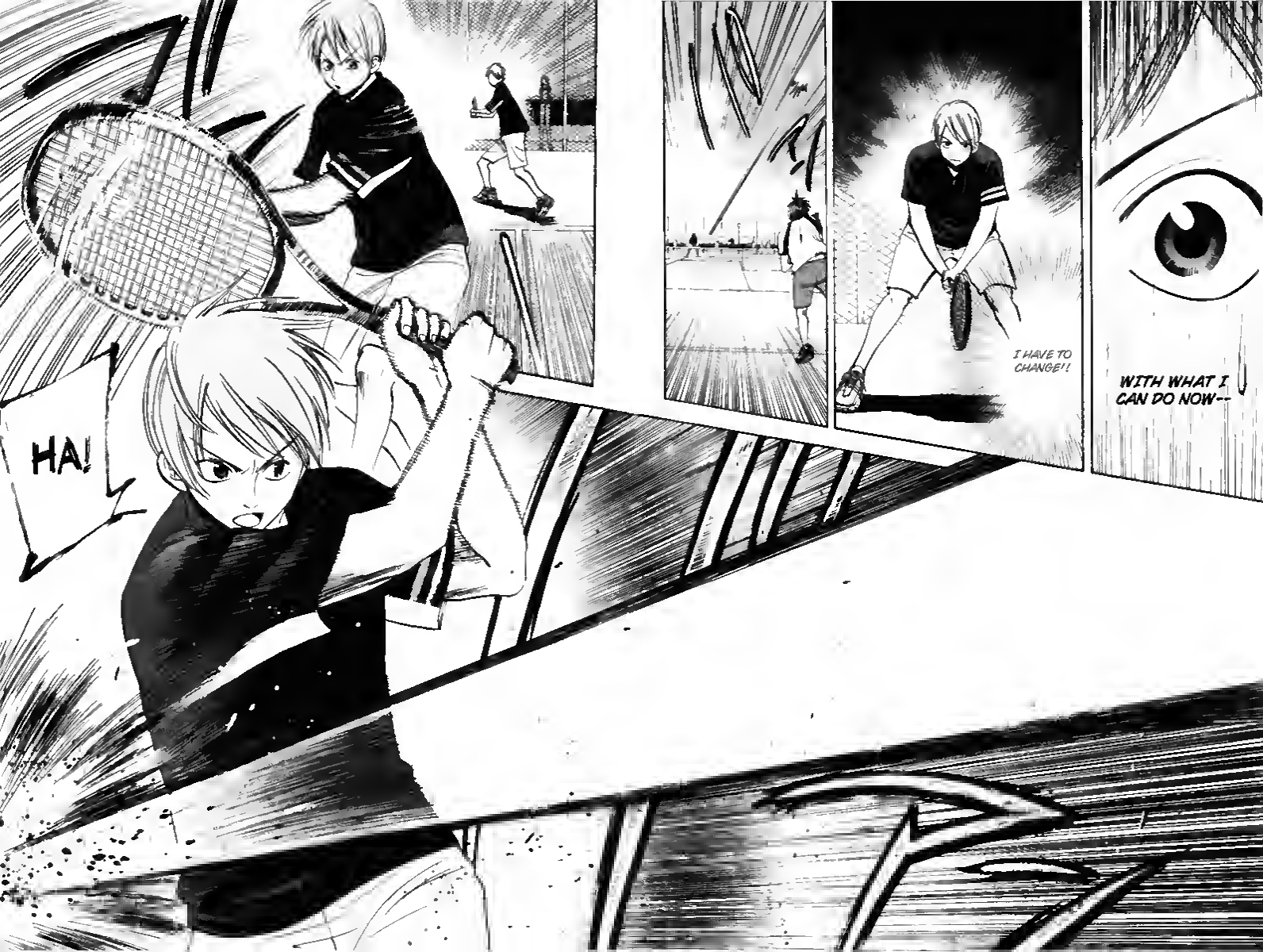
*BREAK MEANS TO WIN A GAME AS A RECEIVING PLAYER


AFTER THAT, IF HE KEEPS, THEN IT'LL BE 3 - 6 (LOVE)... THE NEXT GAME IS MIYAGAWA-KUN'S ONLY CHANCE TO USE WHAT HE'S LEARNED ABOUT ME!!
RIGHT NOW WE'RE AT 3 - 4, SO THE NEXT GAME IS MY SERVE GAME IF HE BREAKS THEN IT'LL BE 3 - 5
BUT IF THAT'S THE CASE... HOLD ON!

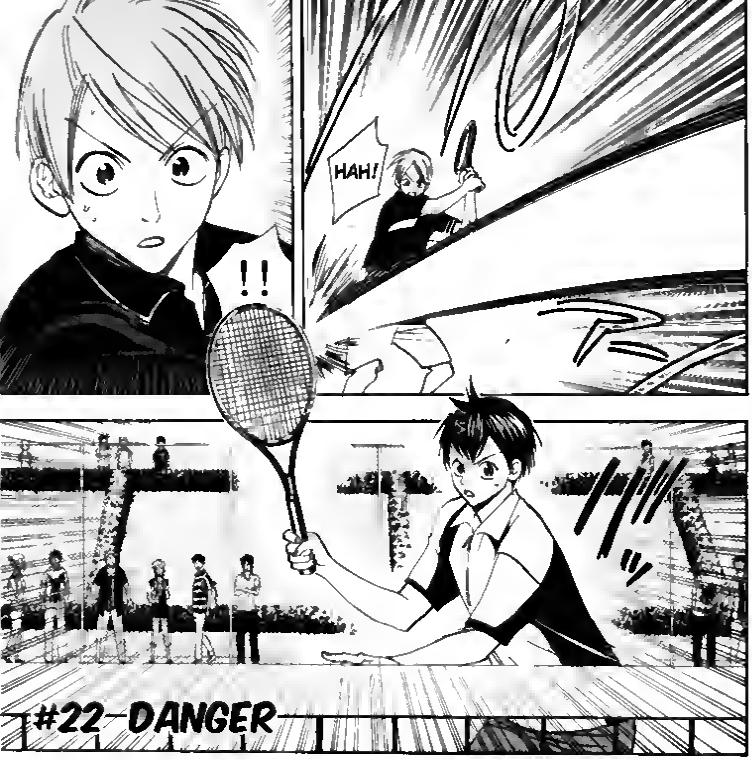
IF I WAS MIYAGAWA, I'D FINISH HIM OFF NOW.
THERE'S NO MISTAKE.

SHIT... I'M GOING TO LOSE!!
TIME
FILA
IS THERE STILL TOO MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US!?
EVEN WITHOUT THAT, IT WAS
NOW IT'S GOING TO START. MIYAGAWA-KUN KNOWS MY TENNIS, AND HE'S GOING TO ATTACK.

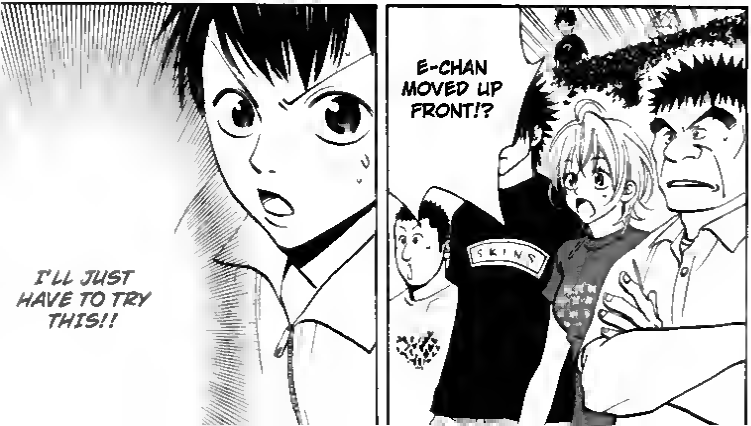
NO ....
THE SCORE IS STILL TIED.
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING.
SOMETHING... SOMETHING THAT I CAN DO.
I CAN'T THINK ABOUT LOSING.
EVEN THOUGH THE SCORE IS 3 - 4 IT'S STILL A DELICATE SITUATION I DON'T HAVE EXTRA TIME TO STUDY THIS SITUATION
BEFORE I GET CAUGHT IN HIS TRAP, I HAVE TO CHANGE SOMETHING
15 SECONDS.


HA!
I HAVE TO CHANGE!!
WITH WHAT I CAN DO NOW--

!?
WHAT?
E-CHAN MOVED TO THE FRONT!?



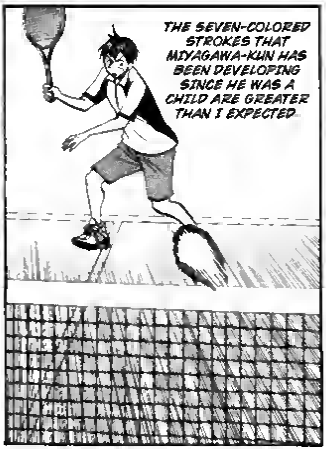
#22-DANGER



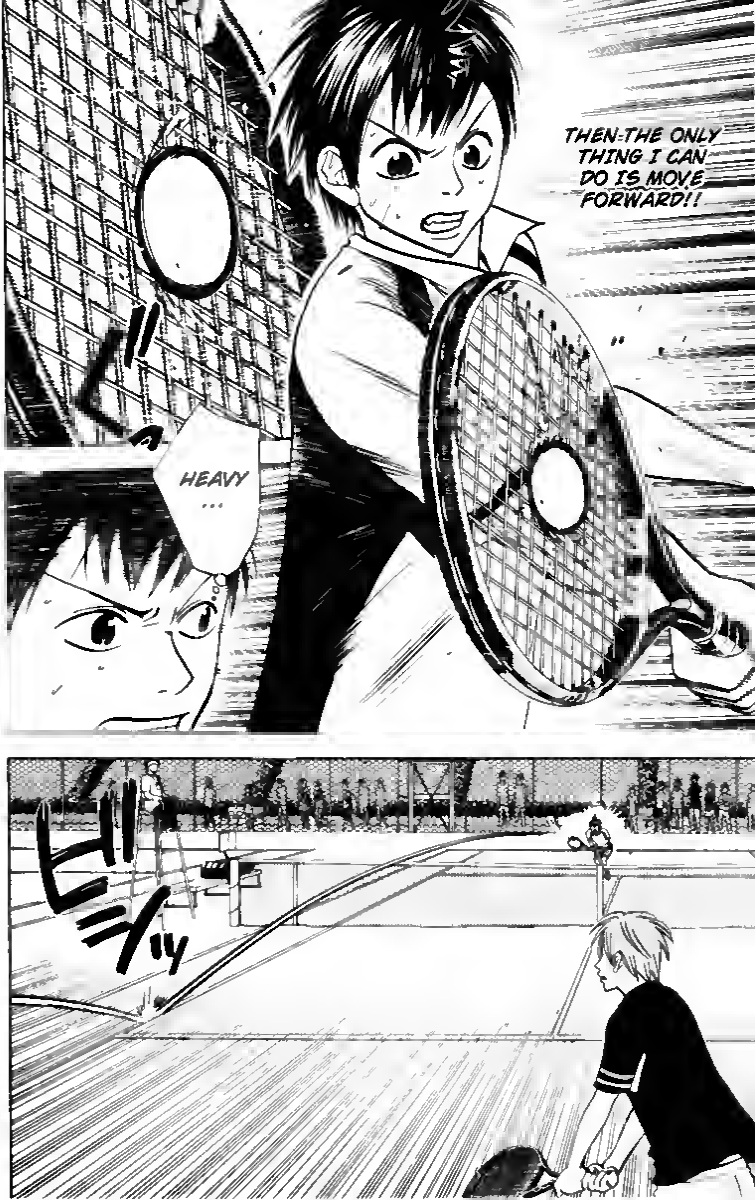
THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT UP TO NOW, MIYAGAWA-KUN WAS USING HIS RETURN GAMES TO STUDY MY STYLE ..
IF THAT WASN'T THE CASE, HE WOULD HAVE USED HIS BEST STROKES FOR THE GIVEN SITUATION DURING HIS RETURN GAMES, AND OUR SCORES WOULD NOT BE TIED.
43
SO NOW, IF MIYAGAWA-KUN USES WHAT HE'S LEARNED UP UNTIL NOW TO ATTACK, HE CAN BREAK FOR A 5-3 SCORE. THIS GAME IS HIS ONLY CHANCE TO DO THAT.
AFTER THAT, ALL HE HAS TO DO IS KEEP HIS SERVE, THEN IT'LL ALL BE OVER WITH A 6-3 SCORE...THAT'S THE SCENARIO THAT MIYAGAWA-KUN'S GOING FOR.
IF I'M GOING TO MOVE, IT'S GOT TO BE NOW!!

UP TO THIS POINT, I'VE USED 100% OF MY STRENGTH TO BARELY MANAGE KEEP MY SERVE.
I DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO GO UP AGAINST MIYAGAWA-KUN'S UPCOMING ATTACK.

AS I AM RIGHT NOW, EVEN IF I CHALLENGED HIM WITH THOSE SAME STROKES, I CAN'T WIN!


THE SEVEN-COLORED STROKES THAT MIYAGAWA-KUN HAS BEEN DEVELOPING SINCE HE WAS A CHILD ARE GREATER THAN I EXPECTED

IF I CAN'T COMPETE WITH HIM USING STROKES -


THEN THE ONLY THING I CAN DO IS MOVE FORWARD!!
HEAVY ...

OUT!
0 - 15
IT'S IN!?
BUT WHAT'S GOING ON? MARUO'S DOING SERVE AND VOLLEY!?
THAT'S NOT HOW HE USUALLY PLAYS, IS IT?
DAMN.
OH...SO CLOSE!!
WE CALLED IT TOO SOON!!
MIYAGAWA HAS ALREADY INPUT MARUO'S ATTACK INTO HIS MIND.
WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE HE WAS SUCCESSFUL IN CHANGING THE PACE OF THINGS BY AVOIDING HAVING TO RETURN THE STROKE NORMALLY.
HOWEVER, I DON'T THINK THAT HE CAN KEEP DOING THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER.
YEAH...I GUESS HE DID REALIZE WHAT WAS GOING ON.
E-CHAN... I WONDER IF HE FIGURED SOME-THING OUT?

I'M ATTACKING, SO OF COURSE THERE'S RISK INVOLVED...BUT WHAT I JUST DID WASN'T TOO BAD.
I ONLY MISSED BECAUSE I TRIED TO FORCE A WINNING SHOT!!
WHAT!? HE MOVED FORWARD AGAIN!!
MY THEORY IS THAT IF HE KNOWS I'M GOING TO MOVE FORWARD, HE'LL HIT A SINKING BALL!!
FIRST, I'LL RETURN IT DEEP INTO HIS SIDE!!

I DON'T HAVE A WINNING SHOT!! EVEN IF I MOVE FORWARD, I JUST DO THE SAME THING AS ALWAYS
I'LL TAKE MY TIME AND CLEARLY WATCH HIS FORM AND THE BALL
CONTROL!!

OH, HE HIT IT TO A GOOD SPOT,
BUT IT STILL GOT RETURNED!!

AH
CONTROL!!

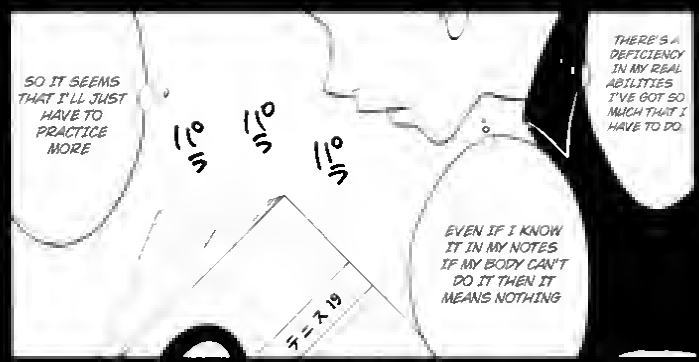
I DON'T MIND LOSING TO MIYAGAWA-KUN'S STROKES,
WOW, HE RETURNED IT AGAIN!!
HE CAN'T FINISH THINGS OFF, BUT HE DEFINITELY HAS GOOD CONTROL.

BUT I WON'T LOSE WHEN IT COMES TO COMPET-ING!!

TWO MONTHS AGO

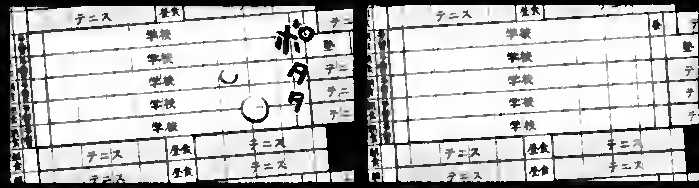
キィ
PHEW...I LOST IN 3 ROUNDS TODAY, TOO.
prince

Britton


SO IT SEEMS THAT I'LL JUST HAVE TO PRACTICE MORE
ﾘﾛﾘﾛﾘﾛ
テニス
EVEN IF I KNOW IT IN MY NOTES IF MY BODY CAN'T DO IT THEN IT MEANS NOTHING
THERE'S A DEFICIENCY IN MY REAL ABILITIES I'VE GOT SO MUCH THAT I HAVE TO DO.

5月
学校
テニス
昼食
夕食
睡眠

BUT MY SCHEDULE'S ALREADY FULL....
I CAN'T DO ANY MORE THAN I ALREADY AM...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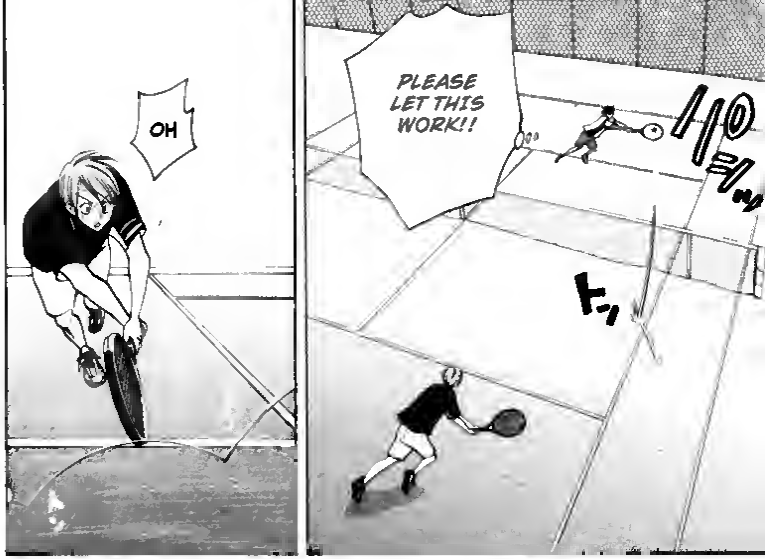
WHAT...!? WHY AM I CRYING!?
FOCUS!! WHAT'S NEXT IS IMPOR-TANT!!
NOOOO MY NOTES

HA
I'VE DONE EVERYTHING IN MY POWER UNTIL NOW!!
IF THE ALTERNATIVE IS TO LOSE WITHOUT EVEN TRYING ANYTHING
THEN I'LL TAKE RISKS INSTEAD!!
HA!

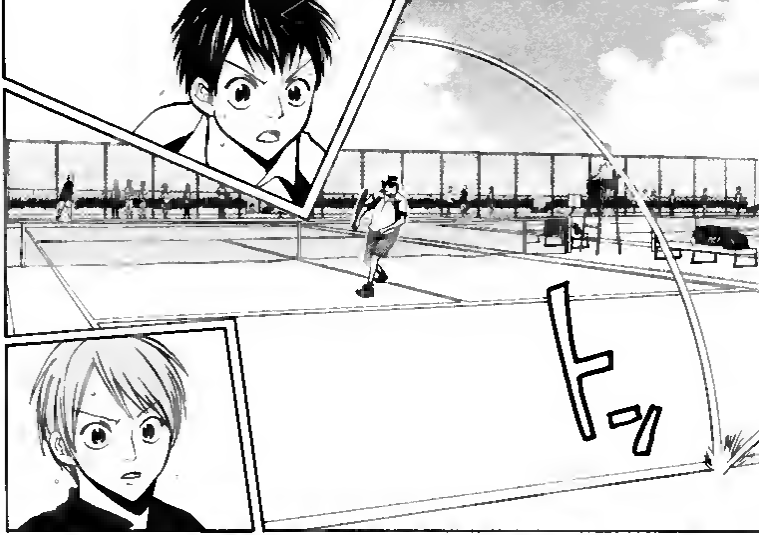

OH
PLEASE LET THIS WORK!!

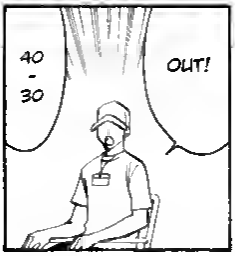
THERE'S NO BREAK IN THE ACTION, BUT HE'S STILL SO PERSISTENT!!
WOAHHHH!!! HE FINALLY GOT A POINT!!
15-15
YES!
ANIKI HAS GREAT EYES, SO VOLLEYING IS PROBABLY MORE ADVANTAGEOUS FOR HIM.
E-CHAN'S AMAZING! HE'S ACTUALLY CONTROLLING MIYAGAWA-KUN'S STROKES!!

MIYAGAWA-KUN'S SERVES AND VOLLEYS HAVE DEFEATED MANY GOOD PLAYERS
I DON'T KNOW HOW FAR MARUO-KUN'S VOLLEYING, WHICH LACKS THE POWER TO END THIS GAME, CAN TAKE HIM...
MIYAGAWA-KUN'S BALL CHANGES DIRECTIONS A LOT AFTER IT BOUNCES.
EVEN BEFORE BOUNCING, IT CHANGES A LOT.
HA
I CAN'T GO EASY ON THE SERVE!!
CONTROL!! ...UH ...AH!!
CONTROL!!

30 - 30
WHENEVER I THINK THERE'S AN OPENING, THERE ISN'T.
タッ
!!

SH...SHIT!!
A LOB!!
GUH
HE'S
GOOD!!
SUPERB!!





DURING THESE 8 GAMES THOSE TWO HAVE BEEN BATTLING WITH UNEXPECTED SHOTS.
MARUO-KUN HAS HIS VOLLEYING, AND MIYAGAWA-KUN HAS HIS PASSES AND LOBS ...

PASSING: A SHOT THAT GOES PAST AN OPPONENT'S SIDE WHEN THEY MOVE FORWARD

HOWEVER, FOR MARUO-KUN, THAT UNEXPECTEDNESS WAS CREATED BECAUSE HE REALIZED FIRST WHAT WAS GOING ON.
HE WAS EXPECTING TO JUST HIT THE BALL TO MARUO-KUN, BUT INSTEAD MIYAGAWA-KUN IS HAVING THE BALL RETURNED TO HIM, SO MISTAKES CAN BE MADE
IF THAT HAPPENS, THEN THE SCENARIO THAT MIYAGAWA-KUN SET UP WILL CRUMBLE.
COUNT, 4 - 4.
GAME, MARUO!!

HE MANAGED TO KEEP HIS SERVE THIS TIME!!
YES!
MARUO TIED THE SCORE AGAIN!!

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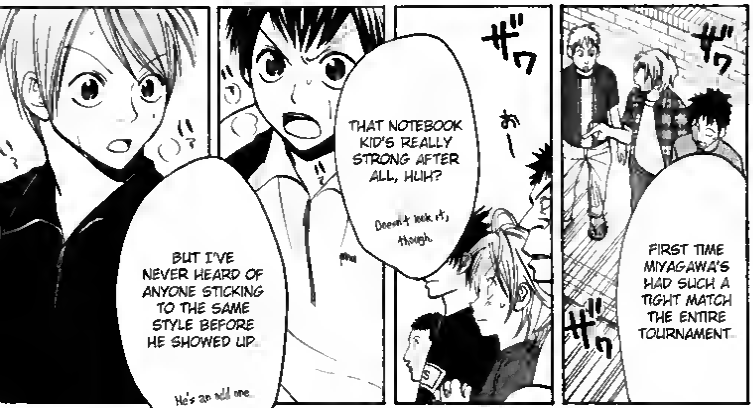

BUT I'VE NEVER HEARD OF ANYONE STICKING TO THE SAME STYLE BEFORE HE SHOWED UP.
He's an old one.
THAT NOTEBOOK KID'S REALLY STRONG AFTER ALL, HUH?
Doesn't look it, though.
FIRST TIME MIYAGAWA'S HAD SUCH A TIGHT MATCH THE ENTIRE TOURNAMENT.

CHAPTER 23: A WINNING CHANCE

HE DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THE TYPE TO USE INSTINCT... MAYBE HE REALIZED SOMETHING FROM HIS NOTEBOOKS?
NOT TO MENTION HOW AMAZINGLY TENACIOUS HE IS...
TO ACTUALLY TAKE THAT 4-3 SCORE UP INTO A TIE...
BUT THANKS TO THAT, IT'S GOTTEN PRETTY ENJOYABLE.
I HADN'T EXPECTED HIM TO BE ABLE TO RUN FROM STROKE TO STROKE, EITHER.
SINCE I DO LIKE BRINGING DOWN MY OPPONENTS, AFTER ALL.
FILA

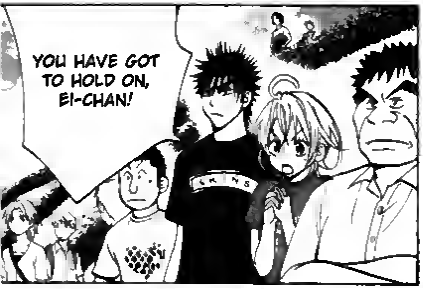
I'VE GOT TO BREAK DOWN HIS STROKES SOMEWHERE TO WIN THIS.
WELL, I GOT THROUGH THAT ONE, SOMEHOW.
BUT THAT'S ALL, AT THE MOMENT.
I'M ON DEFENSE THIS TIME, SO GOING UP THE COURT WILL BE A BIT DIFFICULT.
UGH!
I'VE GOT TO PUSH FORWARD BEFORE HE DOES HIS SERVE!

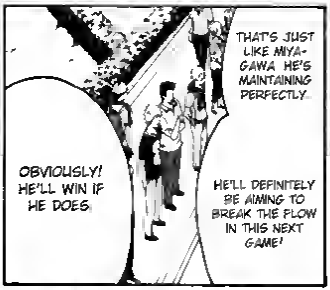
!!
15-0, LOVE.
UH
Got it!
THERE REALLY AREN'T ANY HOLES IN MIYAGAWA-KUN'S SERVES.
I CAN'T LET EVEN THE GENTLEST BALL GET PAST ME, EVEN IF ONLY BY A LITTLE.
FORCING MYSELF FORWARD'S NOT GOING TO WORK.
HOW DO I GO ABOUT THIS?!

HAH!
HE DIDN'T LEARN HIS LESSON LAST TIME?!

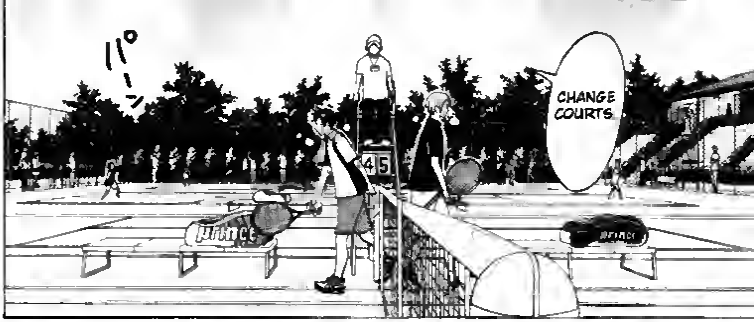
DAMN!
WHAT AN AMAZING LOB! IS HE GOING TO GET IT?!
CRAP...!
30-0, LOVE.
WOW, IT WAS IN! AWESOME!
GUH!
AW, SO... CLOSE! THINGS AREN'T LOOKING GOOD FOR EI-CHAN.
IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE HE CAN BREAK MIYAGAWA'S SERVES.
DOESN'T SEEM LIKE IT.

5-4. GAME, MIYAGAWA!
THAT SURPRISE ATTACK BEFORE WAS REALLY GOOD, BUT WHETHER HE CAN DO IT AGAIN THIS TIME..
HE'S GOT TO TAKE THIS. IF HE CAN'T SERVE AND KEEP HIS DEFENSE WELL THIS TIME, HE'S GOING TO LOSE..


YOU HAVE GOT TO HOLD ON, EI-CHAN!
SKINS


THAT'S JUST LIKE MIYAGAWA. HE'S MAINTAINING PERFECTLY.
OBVIOUSLY! HE'LL WIN IF HE DOES.
HE'LL DEFINITELY BE AIMING TO BREAK THE FLOW IN THIS NEXT GAME!

...
SKINS


パーン
CHANGE COURTS.
45

!?
!?
!?
I'VE HELD ON READILY ENOUGH
BUT I UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON NOW

① TO SPIN AND HAVE THE BALL SINK WHILE WAITING FOR THE NEXT VOLLEY (70%)
② TO DECIDE TO LAUNCH IT DOWN THE COURT AT ULTRAHIGH SPEEDS. (20%)
③ TO SEND A LOB FLYING UP AND OVER MY HEAD. (10%)
③
②
①
MIYAGAWA HAD THREE BIG PATTERNS HE FOLLOWED WHEN I MOVED UP-COURT.

HAH!
THIS GAME'S NOT UN-BEAT-ABLE!
I'VE PRETTY MUCH GOT YOUR FORMS DOWN!
HIS CROSS STROKE'S GOING TO SINK DOWN!

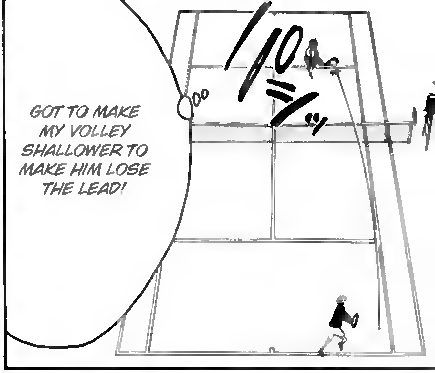
GUH!
A LOB!

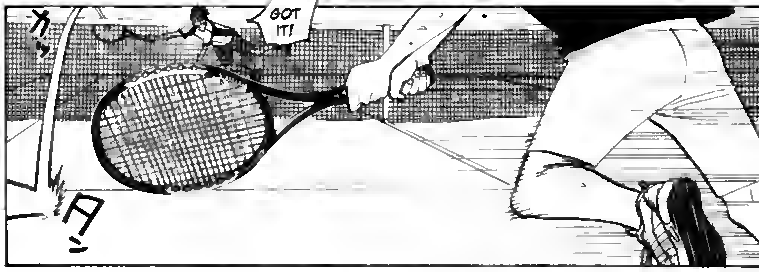
HE'S FAST!
!!
THERE!
HE GOT IT!
SKINS

GUH!
HE'S SERIOUSLY TENACIOUS
DID HE READ MY PLAY?!
15-0, LOVE!
ALL RIGHT!
HUH?
SAYING IT LIKE THAT PISSES ME OFF
AMAZING, ANIKI! YOU TOOK THE LEAD!
YOU SHOW HIM, EI-CHAN!

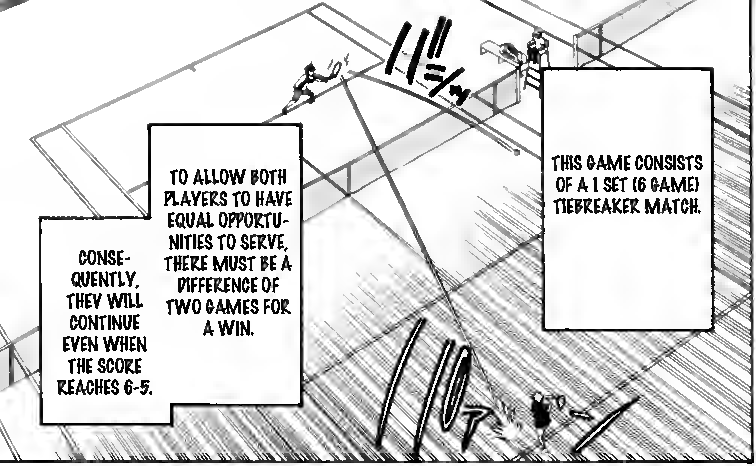
HE'S JUST GOING TO HAVE THE SAME THING HAPPEN AGAIN.
WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN...?
HE GOT THE 3-4 GAME, AND THEN HE MOVED UP-COURT BECAUSE HE REALIZED MIYAGAWA WAS PAYING CLOSE ATTENTION TO HIM UP 'TIL THEN, RIGHT?
JUST LIKE THEN, HE'S PAID VERY CLOSE ATTENTION TO MIYAGAWA BE-CAUSE HE GOT SHOT DOWN THIS LAST GAME.
MAN, HE JUST KEEPS ON RIPPING OFF PEOPLE
THE GUY NEVER GIVES UP.
NO MATTER HOW HE LOOKS,
THE GUY'S GOT PRIDE AND GUTS
SKINS
What, me?
YOU SHOULD FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE.
HOW SHOULD YOU FIGHT AN OPPONENT WHO'S BETTER THAN YOU?
YOU'D BE BETTER OFF TAKING A GOOD LOOK AT THIS MATCH

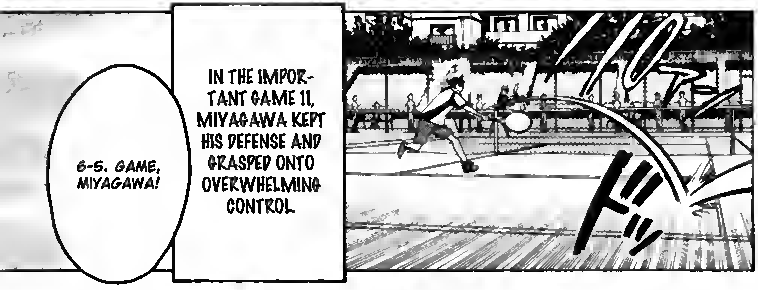
HAH!


GOT TO MAKE MY VOLLEY SHALLOWER TO MAKE HIM LOSE THE LEAD!


GOT IT!

WHOA! MARUO KEPT THIS GAME, TOO!
ALL RIGHT, IT'S 5-5!

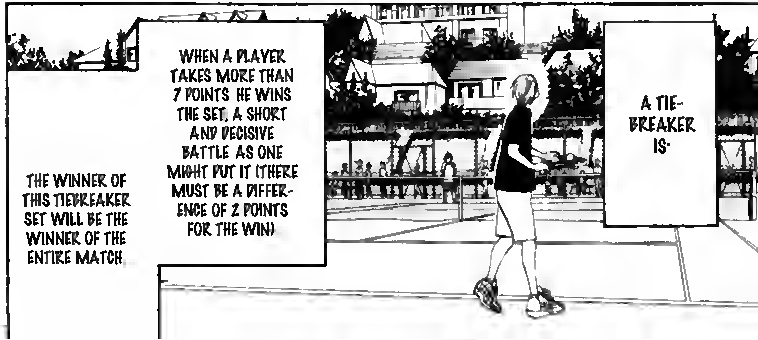

THIS GAME CONSISTS OF A 1 SET (6 GAME) TIEBREAKER MATCH.
TO ALLOW BOTH PLAYERS TO HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE, THERE MUST BE A DIFFERENCE OF TWO GAMES FOR A WIN.
CONSEQUENTLY, THEY WILL CONTINUE EVEN WHEN THE SCORE REACHES 6-5.


6-5. GAME, MIYAGAWA!
IN THE IMPORTANT GAME 11, MIYAGAWA KEPT HIS DEFENSE AND GRASPED ONTO OVERWHELMING CONTROL.
ドッ

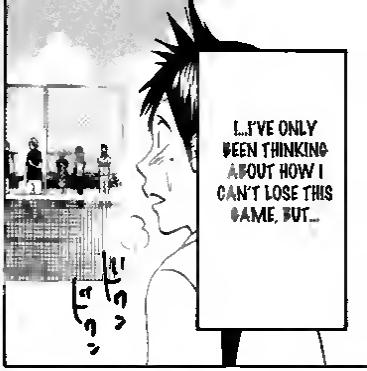
EICHIROU DESPERATELY KEPT HIS GROUND IN THE TIRING GAME 12.
GAME COUNT: 6-6

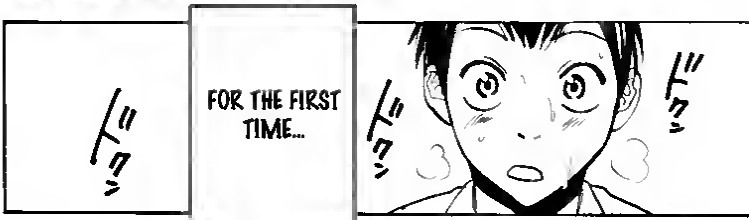
THE MATCH HAD FINALLY COME DOWN TO THE FINAL STRETCH
IT WAS TIME FOR THE TIE-BREAKER MATCH.

CAN'T BELIEVE MIYAGAWA'S HAD SO MUCH TROUBLE UP 'TIL NOW
SO THE BATTLE'S HERE, HUH
FINALLY REACHED THE TIE-BREAKING MATCH


A TIE-BREAKER IS-
WHEN A PLAYER TAKES MORE THAN 7 POINTS HE WINS THE SET, A SHORT AND DECISIVE BATTLE AS ONE MIGHT PUT IT (THERE MUST BE A DIFFERENCE OF 2 POINTS FOR THE WIN)
THE WINNER OF THIS TIEBREAKER SET WILL BE THE WINNER OF THE ENTIRE MATCH

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE BEEN IN A TIE-BREAKER MATCH
ASIDE FROM THE FIRST GAME, THERE HAVE BEEN TWO ROTATIONS FOR SERVING
WHEN BOTH OF OUR POINTS ADDED UP TO MULTIPLE OF 6 WE CHANGED COURTS
WE'VE SWITCHED TWICE, SO THAT MEANS
UNLIKE A NORMAL GAME, I DON'T HAVE TO BREAK HIS SERVES MORE THAN FOUR TIMES
HUH?
AH...


I...I'VE ONLY BEEN THINKING ABOUT HOW I CAN'T LOSE THIS GAME, BUT...


FOR THE FIRST TIME...

I'VE FOUND A POSSIBILITY TO WINNING...!
CONTINUE IN VOLUME 4.

Baby Steps

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PROOFREADER GEORGI
CLEANER DEATHY80
TYPESETTER KAJII
QC TEISHOU

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